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WIZARD®

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MAY 1995

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MARC SILVESTRI HAS HIS HANDS FULL. PAGE 30.

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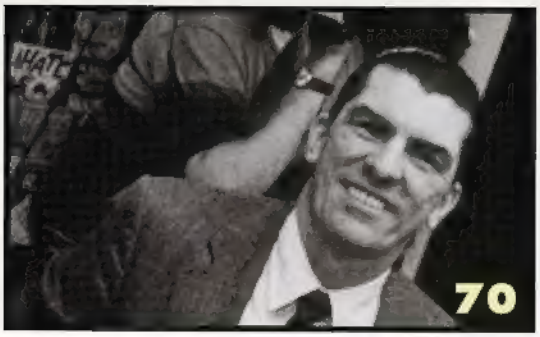

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editorial

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

I know most of the speculators are dead (or at least in hiding), but here's a little story about that speculation thing. Y'see, a while back, I was a manager of a comic book store. I got the job because of my knowledge of comics (hey, I knew Hawkeye's real name), as well as for my love of them. The job entailed ordering new issues, going through and repricing back issues, putting new releases out...heck, it was a dream come true. I was eating, breathing, and living comics. It was the best.

And then I ruined it for myself.

Y'see, I love comics. Always have, always will, but I screwed it up. I began to see a potential investment in bulk-buying, so I started buying massive amounts of particular issues. I'm not talking about doubles—one to keep and one to read—I'm talking about hundreds and hundreds of the same book, all tightly packed and protected, guaranteed to make me millions.

But they didn't.

What they did was turn me off to comic collecting. Me. The guy who had collected comics since he was knee-high to a Bunsen burner! I had zillions of comics, could tell you what happened in every issue of *Marvel Two-in-One*, could rattle off every Avenger who was ever an Avenger...then I lost the fever. It sucked. I still love Spider-Man, Cap, all the greats, but not with that same glassy-eyed wonder. By turning my fun, escapist hobby into a silly Ralph Kramden-ish scam, I took away the fun, and I regret it. Instead of searching dark alleyways for that back issue of *Amazing Spider-Man* I need, I now scan the new comics sent free from publishers, and toss 'em into the recyclable pile or whatever.

So what became of my massive, awe-inspiring collection? With the exception of some boxes here and there, it's all mostly gone. I gave away a whole mess of 'em to friends, and after two moves, some just seemed to disappear. I don't miss any of 'em, though.

So what the hell does this have to do with anything? Simple. My advice to you, if you're a true comics fan and you find yourself buying two copies of the latest death/birth/new costume ish, is to stop. Buy the books that make you love comics, the ones that you can't wait to read. And if you find yourself with an extra buck or three, pick up a new title, or maybe an old one you haven't tried in a while. If not, you may find yourself wondering why you bought any of them in the first place.

Adiós,

Pat McCallum
Editor-in-Chief

Had sTeaM

I Often Die Rich Calm Armpit Cluck
Die Rot Michigan Barn Nun
Grand to Imagine A Real Learn Joy
Get Corn Distribution Old Karate Penicillin, Sick Flaky Worm
Icy Torpedo Now a Dark Nerd
Prodigious Reindeer Cite Renown Jar
I Dig Eerie Product Oh Small Barb
I Dig Sacred Superstition Tea I Pinch All Log
A Sinistral Toad Site Slime of Oak
Assess Chat Restrain Sell Seminarian Witch, Market's Fire
Transitive Stamina Sadist Mad Soccer Bee

Second-rate Dirt Rig Enmity Treat
Sting Ass Instead Rose Lane
Slits Tarantula's Traitors Did Grave Rap
In Karma Gang (Anagram King) A Red Land Von (André Vandal)
This Month's Biggest Dissapointment
The Underground Network

I Bring Wet Instructor
Sean Aune, Michael Berry, Steve Blackwell, Hank Bordowitz, Henry T. Colonna III, Jack Curtin, Paul J. Grant, Leo Hernandez, John B. Lacey, Todd McFarlane, Jim McLaughlin, Clifford Meth, Tom Palmer Jr., Buddy Scalera, Michael Searle, Stephen Shamus, Marc Shapiro, Craig Shutt

Cyberforce Cover Art Marc Silvestri & Billy Tan
Captain America Cover Art Courtesy of Fleer

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*Secret Monthly Plug

Magic Words

Photo Courtesy U.S. Postal Service

True Tales of the Guy Who Opens All the Letters

I get to open about 2,000 letters a month from comic aficionados of all walks of life. So I get a pretty good read of what's on the minds and in the hearts of comic fans on a monthly basis. It seems only fair that I try to share a little bit of that knowledge with you. So every month, I'll take a little space at the beginning of this column to give you the tone and timbre of the letters, and a little inside information to boot. Here's this month's snippets:

• The Spider-Man controversy rages on. In *Wizard* #36's Magic Words, we published a letter from a fan wondering why Spidey didn't kill Carnage during the "Maximum Carnage" storyline to prevent him from harming others. I replied that, quite simply, Spider-Man was not a killer. The floodgates opened and the debate started. Since then, we have received literally hundreds of letters, many of them having seen print in these pages, debating the pros and cons of Spider-Man killing Carnage. The early returns were slightly in favor of Spidey dusting Carnage, but as of late, the overwhelming majority have said that Spidey did the right thing in choosing not to kill Carnage. Apparently, fans don't want to see Spidey go the grim-'n'-gritty route. Thank goodness.

• Envelopes from foreign countries have a better texture than envelopes from the U.S. They've almost got a "silky" feel to them. Really! No kidding! Feel one today!

Now on to the letters. We lead off a little bit differently this month, with a letter addressed to and answered by our publisher, Gareb Shamus:

Hey, Mr. Shamus,

Do you really smell like cheese? I wonder, because that McLauchlin person is always saying that you do and he's always making fun of you because of it. If it came right down to it, could you beat the crap out of him?

Rafael Lindenbaum
Moose Jaw,
Sask., Canada

Gareb's response: "I have tried to beat the crap out of Jim a few times, but he's a really squirmy character and keeps slipping away. One day I'll really show that slimy cheeseball who's the boss around here.

"As for your comment on if I smell like cheese, just whose side are you on here? I'll come over to your house and beat the crap out of you. And I'll let all your friends watch."

Huh. So he thinks. Sounds like a man overcompensating for some sort of inadequacy from where I sit. And for the record, Gareb does smell like cheese, but it's really not too bad. It's kind of a mild provolone smell.

Dear Wizard,

I just finished reading the letters page in *Wizard* #39 and I had to respond to your request for female readers to send in their opinions on comics. I've been meaning to write letters to this-or-that comic book for some time now, but haven't had the time. Now here's my chance to hit all comics at once!

First, my demographics: I am 36 years

old, college-educated, and a mother of three. I do not read Harlequin romances, or anything remotely resembling them. I was weaned on Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Heinlein, thank you very much. I am not a "nerd," unless being slim, attractive, and a comic book reader with a high IQ makes one a nerd. If so, then up with nerds! The only TV shows I watch on a regular basis are *Star Trek* (both current varieties) and *The Simpsons*.

Next, my taste in comics: I collect everything that Valiant, Warp Graphics, and, until now, Defiant put out, plus a few other titles. I suppose that Valiant would be my favorite, because of the intriguing storylines that make sense and don't insult the readers' intelligence (given that we are talking about comics here). Also, the characters, while muscular, are realistically drawn. Warp's *Elfquest* titles are a close second, because of the interesting world they live in and the interesting characters portrayed.

I also read all of the Milestone titles—I love both the story and the artwork. I like *Blood Syndicate* the best, because all of the characters are carefully portrayed as real, believable people. You find yourself caring about them! In the remainder of the DC Universe, I read all the Superman titles, *Books of Magic* (Oh, how I love it!), *Moonshadow*, and have just started collecting *Green Arrow* and *Demon*. I also thoroughly enjoyed *Scarlett*, and was extremely disappointed to see it go. It kind of reminded me of an Anne Rice novel with a Valley Girl twist!

As far as "hunky guys in skimpy costumes" goes, I agree with the *Elfquest* philosophy: a little nudity, tastefully done, is just fine. (And yes, I allow my daughters—ages 8 and 12—to read *Elfquest* and other comic books. Heck, I don't just allow them, I encourage them!)

What I do not like are comics which portray teams of muscle-bound "heroes" with little more than stereotypical exclamations and snide remarks passing for "dialogue" during pages and pages of fight scenes. They strike me as nothing more than a bunch of football jocks with guns all patting each other on the back for doing a great job. The women in these comics are primarily bimbos (my definition being: all hormones, no brains), regardless of how many weapons they carry. I no longer buy most Image titles, although *Cyberforce* and *Gen13* are a little better on characterization. I really liked *WildStar*, and especially *Shaman's Tears*, because of the intriguing new worlds they created. I was overjoyed to hear that *Shaman's Tears* is finally being published again!

I hope this letter is what you are looking for. Perhaps, after you have been inundated with letters from female readers, as I'm sure you will, you can assemble the data into a survey format so we can all see how we compare with the rest of comic readers, and so can the publishers!

Julia Peterson
Imperial Beach, CA

OK, broad (no pun intended) generalization time: According to our surveys, our readership is (get this!) about 95% male. Accordingly, about 95% of our letters come from males. But when letters do come in from females, almost invariably, their letters are very storyline-oriented. And almost invariably, they always mention that they really dig Warp and Milestone titles. Does this tell other comic publishers anything about how they can increase female readership? Anyone listening?

Dear Wizard,

My husband recently had his 34th birthday. He's a big comic collector and one of his favorite characters is Wolverine. I decided to make him a cake in Wolverine's likeness. I had to use a pan that was Superman's body, and then I adapted a Batman face to get the long ears. We know it's not really "art" but we thought you might like to see it.

My husband really enjoys your magazine and has spoken positively about it on his public access show *The Comic Collection* which he co-hosts with his friend, Bill Roberge.

Keep up the good work!

Laurie Shepard
Concord, NH

Looks yummy! Next year, invite us, huh? We promise we'll bring a present and we won't drink all the Hawaiian Punch. But where does one pick up a Superman cake pan in the first place? They got those at Crate & Barrel?

Dear Wizard,

The "What a Long Strange Trip" article in *Wizard* #38 piqued my interest in Tim Truman's work, so I purchased his *Scout* #1-#3 and enjoyed them immensely. I was wondering if there is a collection of *Scout* comics in a trade paperback, or other Truman work like *Jonah Hex*.

Pablo Rivera
San Gabriel, CA

Eclipse Books published two volumes of Tim Truman's *Scout* in trade paperback form. The first, simply entitled *Scout*, collects issues #1-#7, while the second, *Four Monsters*, collects issues #8-#16. *Jonah Hex: Two Gun Mojo* is presently available as a collected edition from DC, and the current Hex story, *Riders of the Worm and Such*, will probably be collected as well.

According to a close acquaintance of Truman's, the creator is looking to restart the *Scout* title as soon as he lines up a publisher. Said publisher just might start with a big "I."

Dear Wizard,

Hate to tell you this guys, but you're gonna have to print a retraction. In the sidebar to Cut and Print in *Wizard* #39 ("Voyage of No Return"), you state that "...we were introduced to the Marquis," and continue to use the word "Marquis" throughout the entire article. The name of the resistance group referred to should be "Maquis." A "marquis" is a French nobleman, and not a part of the *Star Trek* universe.

Elizabeth Cullum
Dallas, TX

OK, OK—so we blew it. Knowing full well that hell hath no fury like a Trekkie scorned, we humbly apologize for the oversight, even though we'd like to blame it all on those sneaky French noblemen.

Dear Wizard,

What's the deal with these "stick-up-the-butt" people who write in whinin' about crap like how a *Wizard* staffer is evil for suggesting somebody spend $100 on comics that someone else doesn't approve of? And other people complain about comics because they don't like what happens in them! Hey, everybody—**News Flash**—this is fantasy! These things do not really happen! They're just comics! If something happens that you

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Leroy Chiam
Age: 12 Sex: Male
No. 55 Jalan Setiabakti
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Likes: Image titles, *Amazing Spider-Man*, 2099 titles

Malcolm M. Buzão
Age: 25 Sex: Male
25 Brighton Court
Daly City, CA 94015-2848
Likes: *WildC.A.T.s*, *Legends of the Dark Knight*, *JB's Next Men*

Corey McGuire
Age: 10 Sex: Male
Rt. 4, Box 318
Marshall, TX 75670
Likes: *Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men*, *Amaz. Spider-Man*

Aaron Renaud
Age: 20 Sex: Male
224 Hembree Park Terrace
Roswell, GA 30076
Likes: *Spawn*, *Wolverine*, *The Maxx*

Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

don't like in your favorite comic, do us all a favor and just live with it!

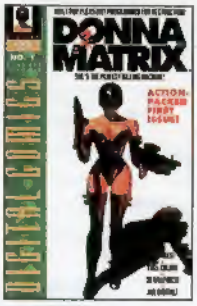
Whew! I don't mean to offend anybody with this letter and I'm sorry if I did, but you people have got to wake up and smell the reality. Read comics for a little escapism. That's what they're all about.

Rich Marquis
Bellefontaine, OH

Thanks for being the voice of reason, Rich. But what's up with your last name? Are you one of those dastardly French noblemen who are going around screwing up all our *Star Trek* references? And how about Bellefontaine? That sounds French to me. Methinks you can't be trusted.

Wizard Magic Words,

I bought *Donna Matrix* #1 from Digital Comics and thought it was quite good. I liked both the art and story and felt it would really go over well. But whatever happened to *Donna Matrix* #2? Will we ever see this Mike Saenz creation again?



M.V. Casey
Spring, TX

Not anytime in the near future. Mike Saenz and Digital's parent company, Reactor Inc., are currently busy with a variety of animation and CD-ROM projects. A spokesperson said that more *Donna Matrix* comics are a-comin' but no release date has been set yet.

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Hey Jim,

How did Nick Fury lose his eye?

A. Clark
Prince George,
B.C., Canada

In a World War II battle, Sgt. Nick Fury caught, in his bare hands, a live grenade that was thrown at him (now *that's* a man!). He threw it back at the German soldier who had originally tossed it, but the grenade exploded just as Fury released it. Fury took a piece of shrapnel in the eye. After fighting his way back from behind enemy lines, Fury finally made it back to friendly territory. He could have undergone an emergency operation to repair the damage to his eye, but such an operation would have kept him out of battle for a full year. The thought of the advances that those goose-steppin', lager-slurpers might have made against a Fury-less army was too much for Fury to stand. He refused the operation so that he could keep fighting. His vision gradually deteriorated to the point where the eye was useless.

These events were first relayed in the classic *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* #27, published in 1963.

DONNA MATRIX ™ & © Reactor Inc. Sgt Fury ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

Dear Wizard,

I would like to know which dates Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, and Venom first appeared in comics.

Carlos Perez
San Diego, CA

Supes first appeared in *Action Comics* #1, published in June of 1938. Bats originally popped up in *Detective Comics* #27, May, 1939. Spidey first spun a web in *Amazing Fantasy* #15, August, 1962, and Venom first appeared in *Amazing Spider-Man* #298, March, 1988.

Wizard!

How many of our years are there in a comic book year?

William McLane
North Little Rock, AR

That's a tougher one to figure out than the ol' dog years thing. The only real answer is that there is no real answer. All we can say is that time flows differently in comics, and there is no formula available that can make a translation to real time.

The big problem? The cliffhanger endings we love so much. When the Abomination is winding up to smack the Hulk on the last page of an *Incredible Hulk* comic, we have to wait 30 days in real time to see the punch next issue, but in "comic time" only a fraction of a second has passed.

Dear Wizard,

Today I decided to look through my Doomsday: Death of Superman trading cards for no particular reason and I noticed something I hadn't before. On the "Funeral for a Friend" cards, which were exact duplicates of the covers of the comic books, they took Batman and Robin out of the picture and replaced them with Captain Marvel and some green guy. I don't know why in the heck they did this, but if you could tell me why, I'd really like to know.

Kenny Skinner
Westland, MI

SkyBox International, the company that published these cards in 1992, had the rights to all DC characters except the Batman and Swamp Thing families at the time. The DC trading card license did not include Batman or Swamp Thing characters, due to the fact that they were farmed out separately because of their movie and TV projects. But according to SkyBox guru George White, "That license has since been unified and SkyBox now has the rights to all DC characters for comic trading cards."

Dear Wizard,

My question isn't really important. But while I'm here I might as well ask it.

Anyway, I was reading *Wizard* #40 and I thought it was funny as all hell, especially because you used the word "ass" at least three times. That gets me to my question: How many times are you allowed to use the word "ass" in any one magazine?

By the way, if you don't answer my question, I'll come down there and kick all your asses.

Josh Lutz
Fleetwood, PA

Oooh, a tough guy, huh?

Actually, due to the fact that we are distributed internationally, we are bound by a bizarre Canadian law that requires us to use the word "ass" at least three times in any given issue. If we do not fulfill this ass requirement, *Wizard* is not allowed across the Canadian border and we don't get to see *The Kids in the Hall* on TV in the U.S. anymore.

Dear Wizard,

Even though you guys are experts on all comicdom and stuff, it seems you have made a very big mistake in the produce department. In *Wizard* #40, on page 46, you say "All those friggin' Ultraverse comics where the king of huge orange vegetables made an appearance," in reference to the character Lord Pumpkin. You stated that the pumpkin was a vegetable, when it is a fruit. As we all know, vegetables don't have seeds, but all fruits do. Pumpkins have seeds, therefore they are fruits.

I remain, your expert on fruits and vegetables,

Mike Edrington
Council Bluffs, IA

Count on Iowa to get these farming questions right.

According to our Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, a fruit is the edible reproductive body of a seed plant, while a vegetable is an edible root, stem, or other portion of a plant. What we recognize as a "pumpkin" is indeed the ovary of the pumpkin plant, thus a pumpkin is a fruit and you are correct.

Geez. This is a tough month for mistakes.

Dear Wizard,

In *Wizard* #40, in the costume contest section, one of the winners was a girl named Paula from Indianapolis, IN. I have a message for her.

Paula, if you're reading this, please write and send your address, phone number, and some pictures to me. Send them to:

Billy Hodges
205 North Cedar St.
Gleason, TN 38229

Print this letter! I'm serious!

Billy Hodges
Gleason, TN

For those of you who may have missed it, *Wizard* #40 contained photos of the winners of our annual Halloween costume contest. One of our winners was Paula, an attractive young lady wearing a very realistic-looking Vampirella costume. Believe it or not (you'll probably believe it), we've received many letters of this type regarding Paula.

This letter kind of typifies the responses we got to Paula. Maybe Billy will get a letter. Maybe not. The rest of you who wrote letters of this ilk can rest assured—we've kept your names and addresses and we'll be mailing out your cold showers sometime next week.

Dear Wizard,

Want to see a subliminal message? Good, thought so. Grab a copy of *Generation X* #3. Now flip to the part near the end where Skin is trying to convince Husk to play Scrabble. You will see a scrabble board with many letter tiles on it. Turn the entire comic upside down. Now look at the bottom right hand corner of the scrabble board from the upside-down angle. There you will find

Will Murphy Age: 16 Sex: Male 117 Spring Gate Drive Chesterfield, MO 63017 Likes: *Spawn, Bloodshot, Deathblow*	Karen Sheets Age: 19 Sex: Female 8565 Ramort Dr. Baltimore, MD 21236 Likes: *Silver Sable, She-Hulk*	Gary "The Guile" Collette Age: 16 Sex: Male 15814 Rio Dell Dr. Houston, TX 77083 Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, Wolverine, Pitt*	Chad Carroll Age: 12 Sex: Male 12784 Middlefork Rd. Amanda, OH 43102 Likes: *X-Men, The Incredible Hulk, Spawn*	Steven DeRuse Age: 13 Sex: Male 3904 Alexandria Dr. Austin, TX 78749 Likes: *All X-ities, New Warriors, Batman*	Terri Low Age: 17 Sex: Female 115 Marcy Place, Apt. #2-F Bronx, NY 10452 Likes: *Morbius, Lobo, Spawn*	Cole Chenk Age: 14 Sex: Male 109 Renfroe Rd. Rt. 5, Box 154D Kosciusko, MS 39090 Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, X-Men, Youngblood*	Matt Vaughan Age: 12 Sex: Male Rt. 3, Box 675 Troup, TX 75789 Likes: *Superman, Spider-Man, X-Men*

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Ask the WIZARD

Q: Is Batman pro-choice or pro-life?
—D. Steinbach, West Chester, PA

A: Well, according to DC's assistant manager—marketing communications Maureen McTigue, "Batman's anti-gun. And boy, do these questions hurt my head."

Q: In Magic Words and Ask the Wizard, do you correct punctuation, spelling, capitilyzation, etc....?
—M. Madia, Pittsburgh, PA

A: Yep. Nothing gets past our eagle eyes! Oh, wait a second...

Q: If Bart Sears did the covers of *Wizard*, why were they signed Wittman?
—J. Clemens, Quincy, CA

A: We passed the ball on this one, over to Bart himself. "It was basically a brainstorm of Gareb's and myself, to see if he could sell *Wizard* without a name artist on the cover, and just go with the quality of the drawing. That was issue #9, with the Venom cover, and apparently that one sold very well."

Q: What are Backlash's talons made of?
—Dylan, Laclede, ID

A: They're made of mc^2 (That's energy, for you Einstein-impaired!).

Ask the Wizard's Wizard

Hey, Wizard,
Did you guys intentionally set out to destroy the entire comic book industry, or did you do it by accident?
—D. Borak, Bloomington, IN

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

your subliminal message.

Mike Lavole
Old Lyme, CT

There are three letters that spell out "s-e-x." Whoopie-ding.

Dear Wizard,

After reading some of the DC/Marvel crossover battles (which were really cool) in *Wizard* #39, I had an idea. What if Marvel and DC merged and their histories were combined? Some neat things could happen. For example:

- Galactus destroys Krypton. Superman and the Justice League are the first to confront him on Earth. Later, Galactus is judged by the Spectre for all of the death he has caused.
- Aquaman finds Captain America in the block of ice. After being revived, he joins the Justice League. Batman, in turn, joins the Avengers.
- Deathstroke takes a contract on the X-Men, but loses his right eye in a battle with Wolverine. He puts Terra, who is now born with her powers, into the New Mutants as a spy.

Why not have a contest to see who can come up with the best Marvel and DC merged history suggestion?

Mike Miller
Orlando, FL

Hey, that sounds neat! No, it's not a contest, but we'd like to see some more ideas along these lines. Send 'em in to Magic Words, and we'll print a few for everyone to see. Who knows? Maybe if we come up with something really cool, it might inspire Marvel and DC to do a *What If?*/"Elseworlds" crossover.

Dear Magic Words,

If the Green Goblin held Mary Jane in front of him and Spider-Man accidentally webbed Mary Jane, don't you think it would suck just a little? I mean, she'd get major webbing all over her body except for her head.

Ben Smith
Fargo, ND

Yeah, come to think of it, that would suck just a little bit.

Hey You Wizards,

I'm in hell...otherwise known as the Marine Corps boot camp. But that's OK, because one of the docs in medical here got me a copy of *Wizard* #41 and that's what's been keeping me going! It's illegal to have books, comics, or magazines of any kind while you're in boot camp. The only thing allowed is letter writing.

It's great owning a copy of *Wizard* here, because people pay me to look at it (especially the pictures of Lady Death). You guys are the best! Keep up the great work!

Semper Fi!

Pvt. Jordan, R.Y.
Houston, TX

Glad we can be of service, Private. NOW DROP AND GIMME 20 FOR HAVING UNAUTHORIZED READING MATERIAL IN THE BARRACKS!!! GET WITH IT, YOU SCUMBAG!!! YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE READING COMICS!!! WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR MALFUNCTION????

Y'know, I've always wanted to be a drill sergeant. And by the way, gentle reader, "Semper Fi," the Marines' motto, is Latin for "always faithful."

Dear Sirs,

I noticed that on page 151 of *Wizard* #40, the opening line from the Bee Gees's song "Staying Alive" is used in a manner which, if I am not mistaken, is intended to make the pictured Jeff Smith appear ridiculous by playing on his pose (similar to that of John Travolta on the album cover of the *Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack), and the wrongly perceived out-datedness of the lyrics of the song.

By feeding the perceptions of society with such ridiculous, frivolous displays, your magazine is committing a disservice to the Bee Gees, who are to this day writing and singing some of the finest popular music ever made.

I believe that your magazine should publish an apology to the Bee Gees and their fans, and that your publication would do well to refrain from slighting performing artists in the future. Long live the Bee Gees!

(By the way, issue #40 of *Wizard* was otherwise excellent. I found your article on Dr. Fredric Wertham to be well-researched, interesting, and refreshingly impartial. I think *Wizard* should consider printing the original Comics Code as adopted in 1954. It would make interesting reading, and point out to modern readers how fortunate we are to live in a time where freedom of expression is not as limited, and would make them aware of just how close to home something like censorship can hit.)

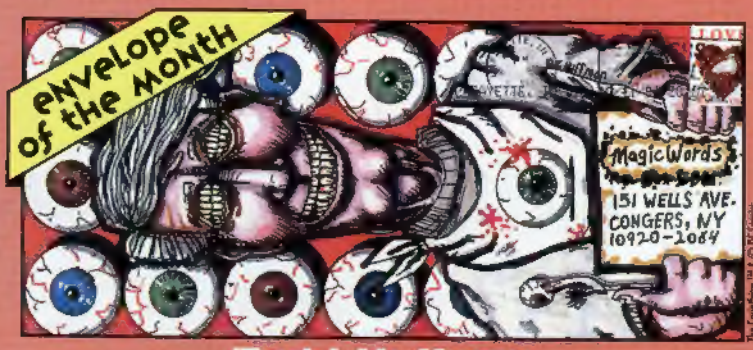
Joseph L. Clark
Seward, NE

Actually, we really dig the Bee Gees. Can't get enough of 'em. And that goes double for ABBA!

(As an aside, the editorial staff considered reprinting the more humorous parts of the Code—at least by today's standards—but refrained in the end due to space constraints. But if anyone really wants us to, let me know.)

Enveloping LETTER ART!

When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and *boom*, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your envelope gets printed, you'll become a household name and you'll start dating the likes of John Goodman or Roseanne (or both, if you like). Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a *Robin* (series) #1 signed by Tom Grummett, *Ash* #1 signed by Joe Quesada, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a stylin' *Wizard* T-shirt! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original framed Joe Quesada sketch of the *muy caliente* Ash. Thanks for the red-hot art, Joe! Artists: please include a clearly printed return address on the **back** of your envelope.

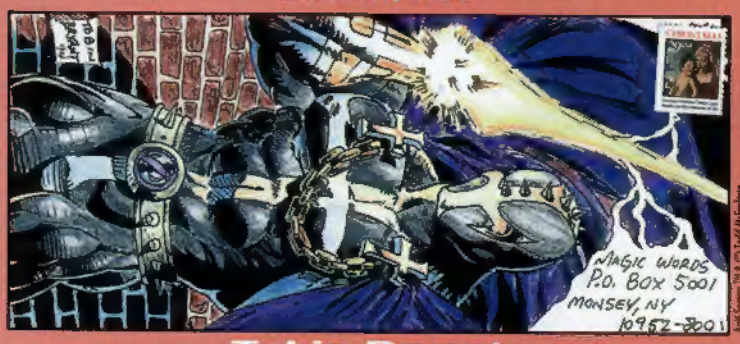


Todd Huffman
West Lafayette, IN

The Comedian ™ & © DC Comics

Damon Butler
Boston, MA

Cyclops ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group



Tobin Bryant
Tucson, AZ

Ash Squares ™ & © Todd McFarlane

ELF
Charlotte, NC

Sylvester & Tweety ™ & © Warner Bros.

Hello, Wizard,

1) Does Wolverine have a last name?

2) If Wolverine versed the Violator, who would win?

Jeff Smith
Gig Harbor, WA

1) Yes, but no one knows what it is.

2) Depends on what verses they're singing. Wolvie belts out a great "Folsom Prison Blues," but the Violator can sure tug at a few heartstrings (ouch!) with his "You Don't Bring Me Flowers Anymore."

Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Dear Wizard,

You can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant.

Thad Thompson
Unionville, MO

Excepting Alice.

Dear Wizard,

My toe hurts.

Scott Niven
Chapel Hill, NC

Yeah, well, I got problems, too, and you don't hear me bitching about 'em here.

Dear Wizard,

My co-worker Scott Misko and I are having a problem deciding something, and we hope you can help. If Vampirella and Wonder Woman got into a mud wrestling match, who would win?

Randall Carr
Douglasville, GA

Hmmm. I daresay Wonder Woman would score the pinfall, but the real winner in such a contest would be our own Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky.

This has finally gotten too weird for me. I'm outta here for the month.

Jim McLauchlin, News Editor of Collector's Sportslook *(Wizard's sister publication), would rather see Mad Dog Vachon wrestle Jerry Blackwell in a bunkhouse match.*

Send your letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

WIZARD NEWS
Compiled by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Marvel Plans Crossovers

It seems as if Marvel's premier superhero teams—the X-Men and the Avengers—just can't seem to stay out of other peoples' universes.

Gary Guzzo, Marvel's director of publicity and promotion, and WildStorm Productions's spokeperson Jeff Mariotte both confirmed a published report that the X-Men will be meeting Jim Lee's WildC.A.T.s sometime later this year. The story, as reported by Mike Sangiacomo in his column syndicated by the Newhouse News Service, will involve a meeting between the original X-Men and the first team of WildC.A.T.s. "It's in the negotiation process, but it's too early to be specific," Guzzo told *Wizard*. "That's our intent, however."

In the meantime, Marvel will continue its incursions into the Malibu Ultraverse already begun with appearances by Thor and Loki in the "Godwheel" storyline and a Rune/Silver Surfer crossover in April.

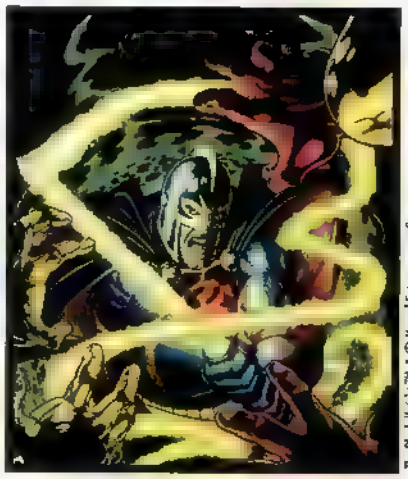
This time around, it's more of a minor character who will be wandering the Ultraverse—the Black Knight. Missing since *Avengers #375*, the Knight will turn up in *UltraForce #8* (shipping in May), in a story written by Marv Wolfman and Hank Kanalz, and drawn by *UltraForce* regular George Pérez. The story will reunite Wolfman and Pérez, who made waves in the '80s with the popular *New Teen Titans* series for DC Comics.

Events will culminate in a clash between the Black Knight's Avengers teammates and the UltraForce. And, according to Malibu vice president of editorial Chris Ulm, that meeting will set the stage for Malibu's fall 1995 secret project.

Marvel editor-in-chief Mark Gruenwald said, "The Marvel/Ultraverse union will have real consequences which will be reflected in both universes' ongoing continuity. In other words, these events are the real deal."

When Marvel bought Malibu last year, much was made of the autonomy the smaller, acquired publisher would retain. Although hints were dropped at that time regarding possible character crossovers, they were thought to be few and far between in the planning: "We don't want to do it too much," said Marvel Comics president Terry Stewart at the time, "but we want to establish some sort of relationship." Now, with three major crossovers in just six months since the acquisition, it seems that "relationship" may be closer than anyone expected.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill



The Black Knight™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. UltraForce ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment.

With saber in hand, the Black Knight journeys to the Ultraverse.

MARVEL Cancels Titles

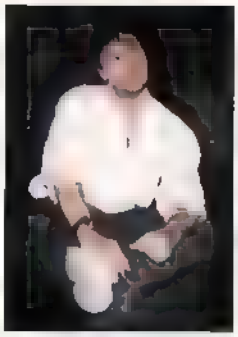
According to published reports and an examination of distributor catalogs, Marvel has ceased publication of more than two dozen titles since the beginning of the year. To many retailers it wasn't surprising, given the reaction of fans to specific titles.

Marvel would neither confirm nor deny the list *Wizard* presented the company, but titles already missing include *Blackwulf*, *Blade: The Vampire Hunter*, *Conan Classic*, *Conan Saga*, *Darkhawk*, *Marvel Comics Presents*, *Marvel Super-Heroes Megazine*, *Morbius*, *Namor*, *Night Thrasher*, *Secret Defenders*, *Silver Sable*, and *Spider-Man Megazine*.

Other titles soon to disappear, and their final issues, include *Blaze #12* (May), *Fury of S.H.I.E.L.D. #4* (May, changed to a limited series), *Guardians of the Galaxy #62* (May), *Nova #18* (April), *Punisher #104* (May), *Punisher War Journal #80* (May), *Punisher War Zone #41* (May), *Ravage 2099 #33* (June), *Savage Sword of Conan #235* (May), *Spider-Man Magazine #15* (April) and *Warlock and the Infinity Watch #42* (May).

Retailers say, however, that fans are apparently not going to miss these books. Bill Christensen, co-owner of Comic Cavalcade in Champaign, Ill., said, "Those titles have withered away and have lost almost all their readership. What's even more damning is that none of our customers have complained that a favorite book is being canceled."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill



"Aaaaahhhhh...silent but deadly," said fan seconds after cleaning a room.

Photo by J. Schuyler

Giant floating head spotted at Wizard booth.

Hasbro redesigns its G.I. Joe line for the '90s. "Bite me, Joe," said newest figure Sgt. Smartass.

LIM Jumps to DC (Sort of)

Few younger artists have stronger links to Marvel then Ron Lim. In seven years with the company, he has had long runs on *The Silver Surfer*, *Captain America*, *Spider-Man Unlimited*, and *X-Men 2099*. Which is why fans may be surprised to see his name on DC's *Hawkman* #21. The longtime Marvel penciler has made the break to DC—sort of.

"For Marvel, I'm still working on *X-Men 2099* monthly," Lim said. "I'm still doing special projects for them, too.

"I'm doing a Spider-Man project that's coming out around mid-summer, like a 48-page special. I'm supposed to be doing a Surfer/Superman crossover, as well. These crossovers haven't been officially announced, but there's a ton of them in the works. It's my chance to draw the big Superman guy."

Lim spent the last five years working exclusively for Marvel under yearly contracts. When his latest contract was up in January, Lim decided not to renew. This was based partly on a desire to explore some new horizons, and partly at the urging of his old *Silver Surfer* partner, Ron Marz.

"Ron Marz writes *Green Lantern*," Lim noted. "He's been, like, 'C'mon, do some *Green Lantern*.' So, by the time I left Marvel, I had an offer there."

Starting with the issue following his stint as fill-in artist on *Hawkman* #21, Lim will become the book's regular cover artist. In addition to his fill-in work on that book and *Green Lantern*, Lim will be penciling *Flash* #105.

"Issue #105 is some special anniversary of issue #105 of the original Flash's run," he said. (The Silver Age Flash began his run in his own title with #105, picking up the numbering from the Golden-Age *Flash Comics*.)

"I'm going to be doing some things for Topps Comics down the road. I've done some trading cards for Image. I wouldn't mind working for whoever, as long as they have good characters. That's the important thing.

"So far, it's been real fun working for DC, too," he concluded. "I think I'll be staying there for a while. I'm looking forward to working on the covers. I love all those old DC characters."

—Hank Bordowitz

Photo by Al Ortega

Longtime Marvel artist Ron Lim, will be spreading his talents around.

NICIEZA X-Forced Off Book

Fabian Nicieza, writer of Marvel's *X-Force* since its inception, was removed from the title by editor Bob Harras on January 6, 1995. "Bob wanted to go in a different direction," Nicieza explained. A former Marvel editor himself, Nicieza took the news with equanimity: "The editor has the right to do whatever he wants." His last issue of *X-Force*, due to the "Age of Apocalypse" interruption of the normal series numbering, was #43. He also wrote all four issues of *Gambit & the X-Ternals*.

Nicieza will continue to write *X-Men*, also under Harras's editorial guidance. Attempts to reach Harras for comment were unsuccessful. "The direction of the core X-titles is a wholly collaborative effort between the writers—in this case me and Scott Lobdell—and the editors," said Nicieza. "Satellite books such as *X-Force* are much more individualist in approach."

At one time, Nicieza wrote seven monthly titles for Marvel; now he'll be writing only one.

Beginning with *X-Force* #44, Jeph (*Cable*) Loeb will take over as writer for an undetermined number of issues. "At least three issues, with Adam Pollina handling the art for that story arc," he reports.

The new direction for *X-Force*, Loeb explains, is based on a breakdown of the team's original premise. "Cable, in essence, told Xavier: 'Your way doesn't work.' That no longer holds true. Under those changed circumstances, there's no way X-Force can continue as a rogue operation."

Loeb will move X-Force back into the X-Mansion, and the team will work more closely with Xavier and the X-Men in the future. Other changes are planned for the team's line-up and costume designs. There will be a new leader, revelations regarding Shatterstar's true parentage, and the development of a romantic triangle between Boomer, Sam Guthrie, and an older member of another team, whose identity will surprise a lot of people.

—Paul J. Grant

Photo by Al Ortega

X-Force #43 will be writer Fabian Nicieza's last issue.

MARVEL goes Exclusive

As *Wizard* went to press, the long-awaited and much-speculated exclusive distributing arrangement between Marvel Comics and Heroes World has become official.

Marvel announced in early March that Heroes World—a distributor acquired by comics' largest corporation in December—will exclusively market and distribute products from its Marvel Comics and Malibu Comics lines to the comic book specialty stores or "direct" market starting July 1, 1995.

"The time has come to emphasize the concerns of the retail community and propel comic retailing into the future," said Marvel Comics president Terry Stewart. "Going direct and exclusive is the most effective way to provide improved merchandising and marketing services needed to grow the direct market business. We expect a smooth transition as Heroes World transfers its non-Marvel business to other distributors."

Affected most by Marvel's announcement are Capital City Distribution Inc. and Diamond Comic Distributors—the two largest North American comic distributors.

In a letter to retailers, Marvel's direct market vice president Matt Ragone cited declining sales and profits as well as retailers reporting declining customer traffic as reasons for the exclusive arrangement.

For a more in-depth look at Marvel's new distribution policy, see next month's *Wizard*.

—John B. Lacey

SAVAGE DRAGON #13 Take Two

"I hated Jim Lee's *Savage Dragon* #13," Erik Larsen exclaimed, "but I hate everybody else's version of the Dragon."

Last summer's Image "X month" gave the creators a chance to explore new territory, try different characters, and deal with different stories. It also caused havoc with continuity.

"I was pushing for the 'X Month' issues all to be #X," Larsen said. "I didn't want my run to be broken up. Jim put one of the characters—that's been in every single issue—in the hospital."

To correct this, Larsen will do his own issue #13 of *Savage Dragon* this spring, to maintain his complete run on the book, shore up the gaps Lee made in the book's continuity, and fix up some holes he made himself. "In later issues," he admitted, "I referred to a couple of things I realized I hadn't done! So, I'll do them in #13. This will give me the opportunity to inject something that will fit seamlessly between #12 and #14."

The book will come out between two story arcs, one ending in *Savage Dragon* #19 and another beginning in #20. *Savage Dragon* #13 (Larsen's version) will be a self-contained story. Both his version and Lee's will be numbered #13.

The only difference is #13 was supposed to come out in September.

Larsen stated, "Jim's was so late, he ended up putting October on the cover. Issue #14 is an October issue, so there are two October issues. I'm going to put September 1994 in the interior of mine."

"People who read the book will appreciate that it fits so seamlessly into the run," he added. "It's not like people haven't done alternate covers. This is just two versions of the same issue. It's just that the interior is completely different, as well as the cover."

This will be the second alternate book that Larsen will be putting out in a matter of months. *Savage Dragon* #17 will also come in two flavors.

"There's two different versions of it," Larsen explained. "Two interior pages that are different. One is entirely different. The other one is an altered page. We've had some trouble with retailers and parents saying I'm pushing the boundaries of good taste. So I'll do a lighter version for kids."

"At this point," he summed up, "there's been enough naked people running around barely covered, that another naked person running around barely covered shouldn't upset them too much."

—Hank Bordowitz

Ooops

Hey, we goofed. (Those darn gremlins...) In *Wizard* #42's "First Quest Contest," we omitted the fact that Advanced Dungeons & Dragons is ™ and © TSR Inc.

And in *Wizard* #43's "TM & ©" feature, the third column of page 41 stated that a lump sum payment of $20 covers "any number of submitted registration forms." Well, this editorial error was pointed out by the author, Jeffrey Jacobson, and the info should've been presented like this: the $20 accompanying the one registration form covers "any number of works listed on the one registration form." Sorry for the confusion.

Also, in *Wizard* #43's *Star Trek* article, we ended up switching quotes on artists Gordon Purcell and Rob Davis on the last two pages. Sorry, fellas.

Finally, in *Wizard* #44, we erroneously referred to Image Comics's *Gen*[13] #1 in the Picks From the Wizard's Hat section as being published by Marvel Comics. We apologize to both publishers for the mix-up.

ZECK to Illustrate Malibu's *Eliminator* Mini

There are two rumors. The first is that Mike Zeck's powerful pen is back in action with Malibu's upcoming series *Eliminator*—true. The second is that a character in the series will play "a pivotal role in the creation of the *Marvel Universe*"—also true.

Although Zeck has laid low lately, he is returning with a series possibly destined to be a key collector's issue. Malibu says that the third Eliminator story will unleash the villain Mannequin, who has important ties to the Marvel Universe.

Ironically, prior to talking with *Wizard*, Zeck was unaware of the significance of Mannequin. "I'm glad I didn't know that...or it might have been too much pressure for me to take," Zeck laughed.

However, to many Zeck fans, the Marvel-Malibu revelation is secondary to the return of the talented artist. Zeck is revered by Marvelites for *Secret Wars*, adored by Punisher fans for the very first mini-series, and credited with the design of Spider-Man's black costume which eventually grew to be Venom.

Yet, last year Zeck practically vanished from the comic scene. "In essence, I haven't been away," said the recently-wed artist. "I've sort of been around, I've just been doing less... and a few other things."

Zeck says he recently performed non-glamorous work designing merchandising including cards and POGs for Marvel, as well as doing some freelance advertising work. He kept busy, but ultimately gravitated back into comics.

Zeck wanted to return to regular interior work, but was not interested in the pressures of a monthly title. "I don't know how I used to do monthly books, but somehow I did," he admitted.

Zeck contacted Hank Kanalz at Malibu to see if any shorter length work was available. Malibu accommodated Zeck with the four eight-page Eliminator stories that will grace *Ultraverse Premiere* #10 and #11 beginning in April. Those Eliminator stories feature the talents of Zeck, Kanalz, Roland Mann, and Dennis Janke.

"We're nothing short of thrilled to have Mike Zeck working on *Eliminator*," says *Eliminator* editor Chris Ulm. "Zeck is one of the most influential artists in the industry, and his pencils on the Eliminator are simply stunning."

Eliminator becomes an ongoing title after the mini-series, but Zeck says he won't be the resident penciler. "It's possible that I might pick up another story arc," he says. "I don't think it'll be good for me or Malibu to try to keep a monthly schedule going because I know the deadline will catch me."

—Buddy Scalera

Penciler Mike Zeck returns to comics this April with Eliminator.

DANIEL to Draw Spawn

Talent doesn't hurt in this business. And according to artist Tony Daniel, it also doesn't hurt to be lucky. "I feel like my career to this point has been a mixture of good luck and destiny," said the 24-year-old Chicago denizen.

Daniel's sense of karma, along with the obvious talent, has resulted in his climbing aboard the good ship Image for the Spawn: *Bloodfeud* mini-series. Also, a dozen issues of *Elementals*, originally done in 1991 for Comico, will finally be dusted off and published this year.

The artist, who grew up on such Marvel titles as *The Avengers*, *Thor*, and *Fantastic Four*, always wanted to make a living in comics. "My mind was set by the fourth grade. Oh, I wanted to be an actor for about a week but I changed my mind and went back to comics."

After high school, Daniel made ends meet "with odd jobs" while doing all the things you have to do to get a gig. "I was drawing and submitting samples to the comic book companies and going to the conventions but I never really had much luck at the conventions. I got a business card from DC once and that was about it."

Daniel's luck changed in '91 when Comico called with the offer of a year's worth of *Elementals* books. He put the best spin on the experience when financial problems at Comico caused a cancellation of the book. "I didn't take it too badly. I wasn't having any luck getting work with a big company so I actually enjoyed getting paid to essentially practice for a year."

Then luck struck and, on the same day, Daniel got calls to do six pages of work for DC on a Justice League project and *X-Force Annual* #2 for Marvel. "I was right in the middle of doing that when [Marvel] asked me if I wanted to become the regular artist on the book. I ended up doing *X-Force* #28-#43 and the first two installments of *Gambit & the Externals* "

Daniel's contract with Marvel was up in January of this year and he chose to cast his talent on the waters.

Todd McFarlane called up offering the *Spawn: Bloodfeud* mini-series and the team up with Alan Moore. "The idea of getting a chance to do Spawn just seemed so far out of my mind. I thought it was impossible. It was unreal I just didn't see any room for me to be there "

But there he is, thanks to some solid talent and, of course, a little bit of luck.

—Marc Shapiro

Photo courtesy Tony Daniel

Tony Daniel is the newest artist to tackle Spawn.

Spawn is a registered trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions. Spawn © Todd McFarlane Prod.

COMPANY UPDATES

ACCLAIM COMICS

Creator Keith Giffen has signed on to write *Magnus: Robot Fighter* starting with #55 in June....In June from the Windjammer imprint is the creator-owned *City Knights* written by Jeff Gómez, and drawn by Val Mayerik. Covers will be supplied by Tim Bradstreet....The Armada imprint is set to debut three new *Magic: The Gathering* titles this summer to coincide with the release of a yet-untitled *Magic* card set.

AC COMICS

Hey, all you *FEMforce* nuts—coming in April that dynamic and beautiful alien from *FEMforce*, Stardust, will have her own mini-standup kit. And things won't just stop with her, because AC plans to do that with all the *FEMforce* members.

ARCHIE COMICS

Yabba Dabba Doo! Hanna-Barbera has joined forces with Archie, and will soon be putting out a number of titles including *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*, and *Scooby Doo*. The fun starts this June....May serves up *Archie and Friends* #15 which spoofs the TV show *Baywatch*....After that, you can party with the eternal High Schooler and the gang in the 48-page *Archie's Vacation Special* #3. It's summer vacation, and time for summer camp, street fairs, and Archie's usual screw-ups!

AUGUST HOUSE

April brings *The Dark* #3, in which the Dark and his enemy, Geoffrey Stockton, team up against the forces of evil, and more of Ms. Rune's mysterious past is revealed. It's $2.50 and has a foil-enhanced cover.

BLACKOUT COMICS

In August, Blackout will be launching a new imprint, Blackout Elite, which will kick off with a horror anthology featuring *Lady Vampré*. This series will bring in some of the top names for talent in the industry for cover and story creations such as Dell Barras (*Incredible Hulk*) and Jake Jacobsen (*Aquaman Annual*)....There will also be a crossover between *Outbreed*'s hero, Matt Chaney, and *Extremes of Violet*'s Violet. It will pit the two heroes against one another and tie up the storyline from the first five issues of the *Outbreed 999* series.

BONEYARD PRESS

This May, Boneyard celebrates its fourth year on the stands. To help celebrate, the company's holding a buy-one-get-one-free sale for the entire month of May....If you thought *Penthouse Forum* was hot, wait'll ya get a load of *True Sin*. This 32-page black and white series tells all about the true sexual adventures of Hart Fisher and the whole Boneyard crew. This baby, shipping in May, is most definitely for adults only....The newest bad girl on the comic scene makes her first appearance this June, in *Babylon Crush* #1 by Fisher and Thomas Derenick.

CALIBER PRESS

A.K.A. Goldfish fans rejoice! In May is the one-shot *A.K.A. Goldfish: Queen* where the truth about Goldfish's lover-turned-enemy, Lauren B'Call, is looked into here. It's a $2.95, black-and-white book....The anthology *The Caliber Spotlight Special* in May offers stories from Caliber's most popular titles (such as *Kabuki*, *Oz*, and *A.K.A. Goldfish*), plus several previews of the titles to

Continued on page 24

TERRY Returns to Newspaper Comics

After an absence of 22 years, Milt Caniff's classic creation *Terry and the Pirates* returns to newspapers beginning March 26.

This updated version of the adventures of Terry Lee and Pat Ryan in the Far East is being handled by Michael Uslan, a comic-book writer and film producer (all three *Batman* movies), and the art team of Greg and Tim Hildebrandt, renowned for their work in illustrating J.R.R. Tolkien's creations and for the recent Fleer Ultra X-Men cards. This is the first professional comics work by the Hildebrandts.

The comic strip is being revived in preparation for a possible live-action TV [illegible]. "During discussions with Tribune Media Services, I suggested the idea of reviving the strip with a modern-day approach," Uslan said. The syndicate agreed, and Uslan turned to the Hildebrandts, also big Caniff fans.

But why update the strip? "Right up front we decided we could not out-Caniff Caniff. We could not continue to do Caniff's *Terry*," Uslan replied. "We decided to modernize it, bring a sense of today's dynamics and pacing found in the best comic books to the comic strip field."

Similarly, the Hildebrandts decided not to slavishly emulate Caniff's approach. "What was Caniff about? He was about angles and light—so that's what you aim for. You're not going to go for the same line quality," Tim noted. "And when you know it's an updated treatment, then you look at modern comics and you try to incorporate that into the look." The brothers have made a two-year commitment to *Terry*.

Uslan told *Wizard* that the TV series is currently in development, with a target air date of fall 1995 or early 1996. Whether it will be on a network or first run syndication is still undecided. "It will follow the concept of the strip, but will have a more serious tone—a little less in terms of morphing vehicles and more in terms of the things an 18- to 49-year-old audience might enjoy."

Patrick Daniel O'Neill

™ & © Tribune Media Services Inc.

Terry and the Pirates *returns in March.*

be included in Caliber's upcoming New World Series line. These include *Raven Chronicles*, which stars an investigative team in search of answers to the unexplainable, and *The Searchers*, featuring a team of explorers who are related to great Victorian literary heroes. The 64-page package, which also includes mini-interviews with Caliber creators, will go for only $2.95.

CARTOON BOOKS

The first German collection of Jeff Smith's *Bone* has sold out and is now in its second printing. The second German collection will be out this June, and Jeff himself will be heading over to Germany to help promote it. In addition, the German magazine, *Comic Speedline*, has awarded Smith "Best Newcomer" and "Best Album/Comic" for 1994.

CHAOS! COMICS

Lady Death II: Between Heaven & Hell #3 will be shipping in May, after a "skip month" to get the mini-series back on track. This ish, by Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes, will feature the unexpected return of Lady Death's worst enemy, Lucifer. It will also more fully explain her origin, an explanation which will prove that she's more linked to profound evil than she dreamed....You'll be able to rest your butt on Ms. Death this June, when the Lady Death beach towel hits the stores. It'll run you only $19.95....Look for Chaos!'s Tour of Terror, which kicks off this April, at your local con. The company's going on its first national tour, featuring state-of-the-art displays, blastin' rock music, and a seven-foot tall living Evil Ernie that you've just gotta see to believe. Check local listings for a stop near you!

CLAYPOOL COMICS

Neil Vokes (*Jurassic Park*) will conclude his two-issue guest run as artist of *Soul Searchers & Company* with issue #12, written by Peter David and shipping in May....April's *Phantom of Fear City #12*, which closes the series, will be a stunner of a finale, in which Jupp's wedding day may turn tragic.

DARK HORSE COMICS

Sin City: The Big Fat Kill #5 will expand from 32 pages to 48 pages, clocking in at a $3.50 cover price. Miller also plans on releasing another *Sin City* mini-series this November....Mike Mignola's *Hellboy: Wake the Devil* mini-series is expected to ship this fall....Godzilla takes on Dark Horse Heroes's Hero Zero in a one-shot special this summer. Expect more licensed monsters to visit DHH characters in the future....Writer-artist Rick Geary follows up his *Night Before Christ-Mask* book with *The Mask 4th of July* this summer....Late '95 sees Frank Miller & Dave Gibbons's *Martha Washington Saves the World* mini-series for the Legend imprint. The story has a satellite launched in the late 1990s burn out and come crashing to Earth—and only Martha can stop it....*Species*, based on the upcoming film, will have two 1995 mini-series. The monster—designed by original *Alien* designer H.R. Giger—is a hybrid melding a human and an alien to better communicate with the alien race....Renowned Manga creator Masamune Shirow, profiled in the last issue of *Wizard*, survived an earthquake in his hometown of Kobe, Japan. Shirow's home was virtually destroyed by the earthquake, which killed more than 5,000 people, but he was able to save all of his artwork.

DARK MOON PRODUCTIONS

Due for release in mid-1995, Dark Moon will be coming out with *Club Team Esteem*, which is directed at younger children. "The target age children are very susceptible to...image building techniques," Dark Moon said. The company intends to follow up by developing a line of software, animation, and end-use products built around the main characters.

DC COMICS

Starting with July's *Wonder Woman #101*, DC has announced that John Byrne will be the title's writer-artist....In May, DC plans on launching the 48-page ongoing quarterly *Batman Chronicles*. The first issue will feature three separate stories....The quarterly *Superman: Man of Tomorrow*, debuting in May, will be a regular-sized triangle issue (meaning it will be an ongoing chapter in the Superfriends' story) shipping during the "off week."....William Shatner's novel *Star*

Dressed to Kill

What do you get when you put 100 beautiful women in bikinis and high heels in a New York studio? No, it's not the next David Lee Roth video. It's actually a Vampirella model casting call. Harris Comics needed a new Vampi model to make public appearances and work the convention circuit in the trademark red costume. So Harris held an open casting call in New York and 100 hopefuls turned up to display their wares for editor Meloney Crawford Chadwick.

"I was really unprepared for the amount of interest the search generated," Chadwick said. "I was wielding a great deal of responsibility—to the fans and the character. Now I know what it was like to be an old-time movie studio head, looking for that 'fresh face of tomorrow.'"

Former Vampirella model Cathy Christian quit in December, taking a new job as Rob Liefeld's newest superheroine, Avengelyne.

The Vampi search concentrated on females over 5-foot-5 who would be able to look the part of the bloodsucker with a good heart. Brunettes were the order of the day, although some hopefuls opted for wigs.

"This is harder than I anticipated," Chadwick admitted during the session. "We're looking for someone heroically proportioned—a superhero. I don't want a real va-va-voom, knock-you-out-and-kill-you girl, because of the kid factor."

Chadwick and company eventually settled on a candidate (pictured) although they prefer she remain anonymous. So what separated her from the pack?

"It was a winning combination," Chadwick said. "It was an overwhelming combination of her character, personality, and her appearance. She is a little more petite than others, but is in excellent shape. She has such a cute face...and she charmed everyone in the office. If she can manage that here, she'll do great with comics fans."

—Joe Yanarella

Photo courtesy of Harris Publications

Meet the new Vampirella model.

Long Hot Summer in Store for Milestone

Milestone Media will be undergoing a significant revamping in May, taking its readers into "The Long Hot Summer." In this three-month event, the city of Dakota will undergo several dramatic changes, starting with *The Long Hot Summer* #1 (of a three-issue mini-series). After a newly-erected theme park forces Ponsland residents to relocate, frustrations and fury reign, and criminals take over, forcing Dakota's heroes to band together against the chaos. Many events will alter the Milestone universe, including: Static pulls apart the Shadow Cabinet; Icon returns to Earth; Hardware gains new armor; Kobalt's life is drastically changed; and we meet a new Milestone hero.

Adding to the enjoyability factor, the first month's crossover issues—from *Hardware* #29 to the double-sized *Static* #25—will have painted covers, and can be read separately. Plus, all of the company's books are being upgraded to the Frocote Format, which features a glossy-coated paper stock and better color reproduction. And that's not all: In the "Reader's Choice" program, which is Milestone's answer to rising comic book cover prices, one Milestone issue per month will cost only 99 cents instead of $2.50. This plan will last until the end of the year.

Marc Nickofsky

Trak: The Ashes of Eden is being adapted in a softcover graphic novel in May.

ENTITY COMICS

Shipping in May is *Astar* #0, with art by Oliver Isabedra. George Pérez supplies the cover to this special issue detailing the origin of the most powerful celestial knight in the universe.

EVENT COMICS

***Ash* #3, shipping in late March, features an intriguing contest concerning one of Jimmy Palmiotti's favorite bands, 22 Brides. The band's name has appeared all over the place in Palmiotti's work, and the first person to list the most appearances of 22 Brides within Palmiotti's books wins a whole slew o' prizes. Full contest rules are detailed in *Ash* #3....Geof Darrow contributes a two-page spread for *Ash* #3.**

EYESCREAM GRAPHIX

Shipping this April is *Vignettes: The Auto-Biographical Comix of Valentine*. This 100-page, black-and-white trade paperback reprints the critically acclaimed *Valentine* series from the 1980s, by Image founder Jim Valentine. The volume, suggested for mature readers, will cost ya $6.95.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Shipping in April is *Meat Cake* #4 by the high-praised Dame Darcy. With her unique drawing style and fantastic stories, Fantagraphics is positive that Darcy is an artist to keep an eye on....The third volume of *Fun with Buddy and Lisa* collects *Hate* #11-#15 and ships in April with a $12.95 cover price....Who says comics is a man's field? *GirlTalk* #1, edited by Sabrina Jones and shipping in April, contains intelligent tales from some top alternative female creators....May sees the return of the smartest kid on Earth, when *Jimmy Corrigan* #1 (of 8) hits the stands. When Jimmy receives an invitation from his estranged father, he embarks on a hellish journey. All these fine books from Fantagraphics are for you mature readers.

FLEETWAY/QUALITY

Coming in May from Fleetway/Quality will be the *Judge Dredd: Future Crime* graphic novel. Collected in this work are all the criminal classics that made Dredd great. Written by original Dredd-scribe John Wagner, this is a must read!....Also in May, the art of fantasy artist Larry Elmore is collected in *Valley of Steele*. Taken from his own personal gallery, Elmore chose six of his finest creations to be used in a limited edition portfolio. If you are in awe of Elmore's talents, then this portfolio will not disappoint you.

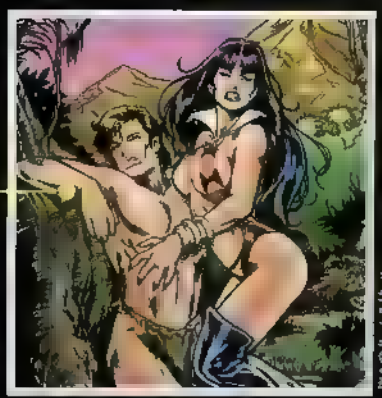
HARRIS COMICS

The "Mystery Walk" epic, written by Tom Sniegoski and drawn by Kevin Sharpe and Caesar, begins in May's *Vengeance of Vampirella* #14 and runs through October's #19. This self-contained story will uncover her full, shocking origin. Each of the six issues will also include a centerspread by Buzz (and all six spreads combine to form a huge poster).

IMAGE COMICS

•Extreme Studios

Extreme Studios announced that they have inked X-Men artist Roger Cruz to a long-term deal. "We're totally revamping the Youngblood line with Roger as the driving force," said Extreme president Rob Liefeld. "He's easily the brightest new star in the comics industry today. Nearly every fan in the industry should be familiar with Roger Cruz as an artist: If not, we'll make sure they are."....*Bloodstrike* will be relaunched in June as *Bloodstrike: Assassin* chronicling the exploits of Cabot and the experts, featuring a totally new direction following the New Order....*Cybrid* will launch in June, the tale of a cybernetic ninja seeking



TM & © Harris Publications

WARNER Books Makes "BIG" Deal

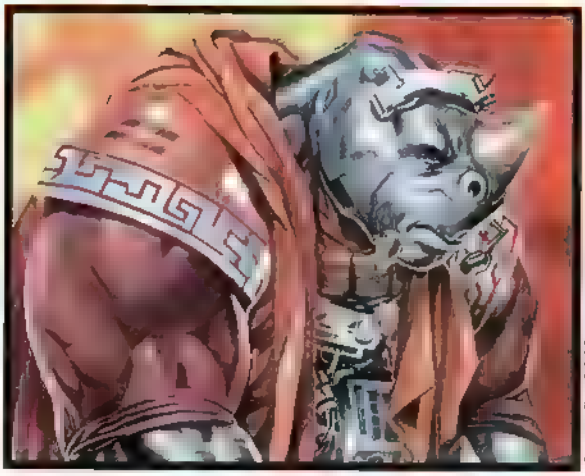
BIG Entertainment just got bigger, thanks to a deal inked with Warner Books, a division of Time-Warner Inc. The book publisher will be publishing novelizations based on two of BIG Entertainment's Tekno•Comix book titles, *Leonard Nimoy's Primortals* and *Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe*.

The initial deal—terms are undisclosed—will likely see novels based on these properties sometime late this year. *Primortals* is a first-contact story that examines the possibilities of how earthlings would react if our planet were about to be visited by aliens. Best known for his role as Mr. Spock on the original *Star Trek* series, Nimoy has also authored a number of books, including his autobiography *I Am Not Spock*. Although it is unlikely that he will author any of the Warner novels, he may indeed co-plot them, as he did the film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*.

The second property, *Lost Universe*, which Warner will be publishing in both hardcover and paperback versions, presents the final vision of Gene Roddenberry, the legendary *Star Trek* creator, according to the company. It is a new tale about space exploration in the future, which revolves around a destroyed planet, unique characters, and a mysterious and powerful ancient culture.

"The novelizations will increase the awareness of the Tekno•Comix product line," Big Entertainment's Denise Treco told *Wizard*. "Even though the deal with Warner initially addresses the Gene Roddenberry and Leonard Nimoy projects, other books will most likely become novelizations later on. All of this will go to build the Tekno•Comix name in the marketplace—when people think of good science fiction, they'll think of us."

—Clifford Meth



You might be reading Primortals in novel form before the end of this year.

revenge for the death of his true love....Coming in July will be *Battlestar Galactica*, based on the 1970s TV show.

•Shadowline Ink

Now that ShadowHawk's dead, what are all you fans gonna read? Why, *The New ShadowHawk*, of course, starting in June. Issue #1—by Kurt Busiek, James Fry, and Andrew Pepoy—tackles the obvious question of who the new ShadowHawk is.

•Top Cow

Cyberforce #15 will see David Finch take over the drawing chores for Marc Silvestri, who will still oversee the book....Mike Turner will be the new artist on *Codename: Stryke Force* starting with issue #14....Top Cow also announced the formation of Ballistic Studios which will serve as a subdivision of Top Cow for acquired new properties outside of Top Cow, such as Dale Keown's *The Pitt*.

•WildStorm Productions

Barry Windsor-Smith is providing the covers to all 10 "WildStorm Rising" x-over issues in May....Clear your calendars, 'cause June is "StormWatch Month" with both issues #23 and #24 on sale. The event carries over to July, when *StormWatch* #25 is reprinted....Pop Mahn is the new artist on *Union*, starting with issue #5.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Shipping in May is the two volume hardcover slipcased *Comic Strip Century*, giving the illustrated history of comic strips from the *Yellow Kid* all the way up to contemporary strips....*Collectibly Mad—The Mad and E.C. Collectibles Guide* ships in April. This 320-page book is touted as the first fully complete guide to *Mad* and *E.C.* collectibles and includes a rare interview with the late William M. Gaines. A hardcover and signed and numbered edition by Gaines (signed before he died in 1992) will be available in May.

LIGHTNING COMICS

In May, Lightning will reprint *Hellina* #1, the first solo book starring the company's increasingly popular, heart-stopping Bad Girl.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

Razor: Burn #4, shipping in June, will spin off Razor's sister Stryke, into her own mini-series in June titled *Stryke: Natural Born Killer* #1.

MALIBU COMICS

Curse of Rune #1 ships in May, following the events of April's *Rune/Silver Surfer* flipbook. Written by Chris Ulm and illustrated by Kyle Hotz, the first issue explores the ramifications of Rune's possession of Adam Warlock's Soul Gem. "The Loki Connection" storyline begins this month, starting with *Hardcase* #23. (Hardcase now possesses the Time Gem from the Marvel Universe.) Loki will then appear in one Ultraverse book per month....Malibu has announced that its *Star Trek: Voyager* comic, originally scheduled for a January release, has been "gridlocked." The book will be resolicited at a later date.

MARS COMICS

Tony Caputo, founder of NOW Comics in 1985, returns to the comic industry in May beginning with *The Complete Guide to Publishing a Successful Comic Book*. In MARS's press release, Caputo said this 200-page book contains "everything you need to know to start a self-publishing comic company or expand an existing one...and more." This reference book, which includes storytelling, printing, distributing, and marketing tips (and more) will be $24.95, and will be available through comic stores....On the other end of the comic store, readers will be treated to *Vespers*, the first offering from the MARS Comics division and the first comic book series created, written, and penciled by Caputo himself. The story demonstrates what would really happen if a team of six heroes existed in today's society.

MARVEL COMICS

In the wake of the "After Xavier" storyline, one of the alternate X-Men titles will remain after the story's conclusion in *X-Men: Omega* shipping in April. According to Marvel, some of the alternate X-Men characters will survive the change back to the original continuity. But Marvel is staying mum on which characters will replace their counterparts and the identity of the "Alternate X-Men" title that will survive the transition.

"In essence," said Marvel marketing manager Dan Buckley, "a 10th regular X-Men

Continued on page 28

NEWS UP & COMING

MATT HALEY

Matt Haley was always clear on comic books. He was also a little unclear.

"When I got into this business I didn't know what the hell I wanted out of it. I just knew I wanted to be in it."

Haley, currently the big man on the Dark Horse Comics block with *Ghost*, was a big *Legion of Super-Heroes* fan growing up in the '70s. "I always knew this is what I was going to do. The only question was how it was going to happen and how I was going to do it. My grades at school weren't very good, so I figured I'd better get good at this," recalls Haley.

The illustrator, who remembers being "really damned slow" at the time he first started out, did some *Star Trek* samples for DC. He then quit his job as a country music radio disc jockey—"I needed the money, and it beat working at McDonalds."—and spent the last of his money to go to the 1990 San Diego Comic Con "to see if I was doing this right."

Haley met some people and got some good advice. He returned home, did a second set of *Star Trek* samples and landed his first paying gig: DC's *Star Trek: The Next Generation Annual* #2. "I hit the roof when I got that job. I was living on food stamps and living rent free with somebody who believed in my talents. The *Star Trek* annual turned out to be 54 pages of licensed hell. They threw this big monster at me. It was fun, I got it out of my system, and I'll never do it again."

For a while it seemed Haley would never do it again. Six more months on food stamps, post-*Star Trek*, was followed by work on Malibu's *Tarzan the Warrior* that was canceled before Haley's book ever appeared. After that, a 12-issue run on *Phantom of Fear City* for Claypool Comics was a real bummer.

Ghost & X™ & © Dark Horse Comics

"Drawing a pirate comic was not my thing," reflects Haley. "I hated it. I was slow. I was wrecking their publishing schedule. I was pretty much getting used to the idea that I would have a mediocre career and that I would always have a night job."

Haley's hell continued through *Brigade* #2 and a 12-page Justice *League Quarterly* job that "hopefully will never see print. I don't know why they didn't use it, but I'm thankful they didn't." But just when things looked their darkest, Dark Horse called. "They needed somebody who could draw beautiful women and big guns."

Haley's stock immediately rose with the critical acclaim of last summer's *Ghost Special*. He followed that with work on *X* #8 and is now working regularly on every fourth issue of the *Ghost* monthly book with his friend and inker Tom Simmons; their run on the book starts with July's *Ghost* #4.

The pencil pro, who puts his *Ghost Special* work at the top of his short list of good works, is pushing hard for an individual style.

"I keep hearing comparisons between my work and that of [fellow *Ghost* artist] Adam Hughes, but I've been trying to stay away from that. My thing is to take monsters and things that aren't real and draw them in a way that would make them seem like they might be real. I don't want to be the next Adam Hughes. I kind of want to be the first Matt Haley. I kind of want to leave my mark."

—Marc Shapiro ☆

series has already been launched. One of the nine monthly X-Books will, for very logical reasons that I cannot reveal, continue as a regular series." The announcement of the specific book wasn't available at presstime but will be solicited in the June Marvel Mega Pack....*The Batman Adventures* artist Mike Parobeck said he is leaving the popular DC title to draw the monthly *X-Men Adventures*. Marvel couldn't confirm this at press time.

PENTHOUSE COMIX

An early summer issue of *Omni Comix* will feature Larry Niven's "Ringworld Throne," with art by Bill Sienkiewicz, John Byrne, Mike Mignola, Tim Hildebrandt, Boris Vallejo, Richard Corben, Walt Simonson, and Cam Kennedy.

TEKNO•COMIX

Shipping in May is Neil Gaiman's *Lady Justice* #1 by C.J. Henderson and Michael Netzer. Is it the newest Bad Girl to hit the comics scene? Well, this crime/suspense series stars

™ & © BIG Entertainment Inc.

a blind, golden-tressed woman in black, who carries the scales of justice in her hand. So, you figure it out.

TOPPS COMICS

The five-issue *Lady Rawhide* mini-series is set to debut in July, by Don McGregor, Mike Mayhew, and Jimmy Palmiotti. Before then though, Topps will reprint her first two appearances (*Zorro* #2-#3) in a special edition in June. The ongoing *Zorro* series, which was put on hiatus last November to allow the creators to work on *Lady Rawhide*, is expected to return after the mini-series runs its course.

VEROTIK

June sees the release of two new bi-monthly ongoing series. *Satanika* #0, retells and expands the origin of that nasty bad girl with hooves, by Glenn Danzig and Simon Bisley, while *Devilman* #1 brings the popular Manga artist Go Nagai to America in full color! Both titles are for you mature reader types.

Marc Silvestri is about to go mainstream, and he's doing it on his own terms. He hasn't worn a tie for the occasion; instead, he's wearing the same jeans and green plaid shirt he wore yesterday. Silvestri hasn't gone to the media; instead, the media has come to him. They cluster around him on the sidewalk outside the Golden Apple comic book store in Hollywood, where a long line of people waits for the head of Top Cow Productions to sign *Cyberforce Origins: Cyblade*.

With the patient ease of a professional, Silvestri answers all of the questions he's answered before. Where do his ideas come from? "Everywhere. Sometimes the back of a cereal box." How did he get started? "It looked like an easy job; you stay home all day," Silvestri says, giving one variation on the age-old question of his comic genesis...

"If I'd known how hard it was..."

ON THE MARC

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF IMAGE CO-FOUNDER MARC SILVESTRI

BY DIANE BAILEY • PHOTOS BY CHAIS MOLTYMORE

Television cameras from NBC's *Today* show capture his every word and movement, and Silvestri, perhaps anticipating his allotted 15 minutes of fame, lets the cameras transform him into a celebrity for a day. He poses next to a giant, inflatable Ripclaw figure, and puts hand in claw. The cameras film. He looks at the store's window display, and the cameras film. The line of people starts at the door, continues down the block, turns the corner, stops at the alley, starts at the other side of the alley, and goes some more. The police came earlier, to make the line more orderly. People waiting in line stare at the cameras, and the cameras film.

Wanna-bes clutch portfolios, ready to hawk their wares during their brief moment with Silvestri. "That's how I got the job," Silvestri commiserates to the camera. "Everybody I know has gone up to a professional, shaking like a leaf." The *Today* show wants Silvestri to look at one young man's samples. "Oh, God," says Silvestri, as they lead him over. "I hope they're not horrible."

Inside, the fans come in two and three at a time to get their books autographed. One fan wants Silvestri to sketch Ripclaw, Silvestri obliges, starting in on the eyes. Another wants to know what inspired him. "I think it was desperation," Silvestri says. Could Silvestri write that on the book? "If I can spell desperation," he says. Still another shows Silvestri his portfolio. "That's a healthy girl," Silvestri says, glancing at the pictures. "Did I look at your stuff before?"

"You remember!" the man says, pleased.

"I remember!" Silvestri exclaims, offering a critique.

One woman wants to know where Silvestri's wife is. "Probably stuck at the mall," Silvestri answers affably, although he's not married. His fiancée, Cynthia, of china-doll skin and black hair, comes later, and Silvestri stops signing to give her a kiss. The people file through, and Silvestri loops out his signature. "He's perfected that," says Top Cow editor-in-chief and writer Dave Wohl. "Everyone's got to refine their signature to make it one swoop."

Silvestri has mastered the whole routine, except for one little thing. Nicole Merke, who does advertising and promotions for Top Cow, has a message for him: "Will you tell Marc to please spit out his gum when he's talking to the camera?"

Silvestri listens to the advice, and says pleasantly, "Sure. I'll spit it at the camera."

HOW TO DRAW RIPCLAW

All artwork and character [illegible] Top Cow Productions
All photography © 1995 [illegible] Wolenhouse

Standing in "the pit," a medium-sized room with eight artists' stations at his Santa Monica studio, Silvestri explains that Image Comics exists partly to scout new talent. He stops a stranger in the hall. "Can you draw?" he asks. "Can you color? Letter?" No, no, and no. "Damn."

The average age of the artists is just above the legal drinking age, and Silvestri, at 35, very much plays the big brother. "I enjoy the enthusiasm of these guys. You walk in, their eyes are this big," he says, using his fingers to make raccoon circles around his eyes. "Their minds are wide open."

Top Cow working hours generally start in mid-afternoon and go to wee morning, with lots of breaks for food and TV. What with freelancers, Silvestri frequently doesn't know who belongs and who doesn't. "I'll see someone and think he wandered in off the street. I'll say, 'Can I help you?' and he'll say, 'I work for you.' And then I feel like an idiot. 'Oh! Sorry. What's your name?' And then of course I'll forget it the next day."

In the pit, drawings, books, and Federal Express boxes litter the floor. The bookshelf includes *The Drama of the Oceans*, *Atlas of Human Anatomy for the Artist*, and *The Time-Life Book of the Family Car*. Posted on the door are some "Far Side" cow cartoons. Outside in the foyer, next to the water cooler and the copy machine, is a life-sized cardboard cutout of a green dragon, with a caricature of one artist's head stuck on the top.

VITAL STATS:

Name: **Marc Joseph Silvestri**
Date of Birth: **March 29, 1958**
Occupation: **Artist-Creator-Publisher**
Base of Operations: **Top Cow Productions - Santa Monica, Calif.**
Career Highlights: **Lengthy stints on Marvel Comics's *Uncanny X-Men* & *Wolverine*, co-founding Image Comics in 1992, redefining the independent comic book market, and creating Image's *Cyberforce* & *Codename: Stryker's Force*, among others.**

One work station is equipped with a sleeping bag, air freshener, and a Las Vegas travel guide. Silvestri's table has a toothbrush and toothpaste. "I used to spend easily 12 hours a day at the drawing table," he says. The chair's seat, in fact, has indentations. "It came that way," Silvestri protests, then examines it closer. "Is that what my butt looks like?"

I reach for a small, curvy plastic doo-dad on one table. "DON'T TOUCH THAT!" Silvestri shrieks. I pull back, faster than grease from Dawn. Silvestri grins.

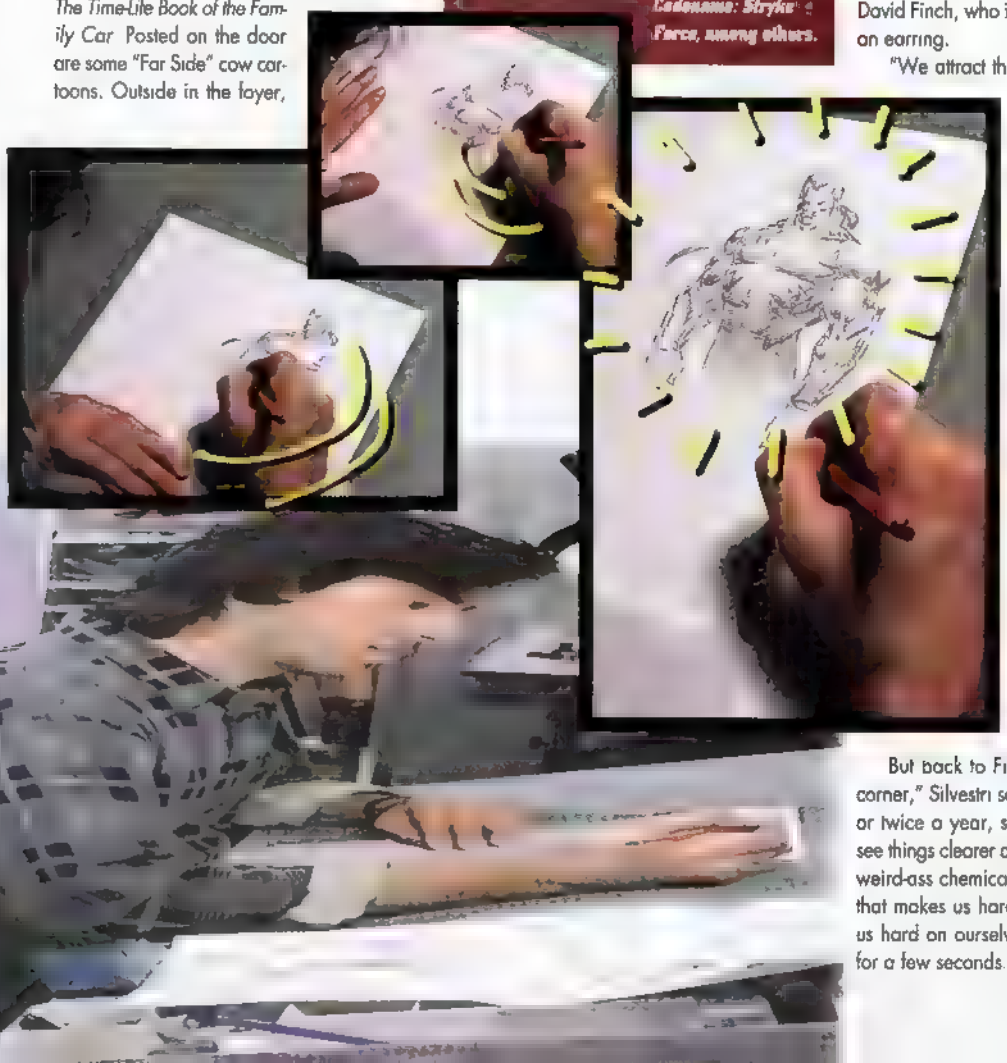
Gotcha.

"I'm going to use David Finch as a model," Silvestri says, ready to give a quick demonstration of how Top Cow works. "David Finch is a classic example of the kind of guy this place thrives on. The reason is there's a lot of garbage in here, and somebody has to take out the frickin' garbage."

Laughter all around.

"You guys were actually the only Image guys who would look at my work. I guess I looked unprofessional or something," says David Finch, who is completely bald and has an earring.

"We attract the more pitiful," agrees Silvestri. "I said to Dave Wohl, 'Dave, the more pitiful a guy looks, the more we want him.'"



The principle applies also to samples. Take Mike Turner. "I can say now, because he's actually developed into quite an artist, that his samples sucked," Silvestri says, but adds, "My first samples make Mike's first samples look amazing."

Mike disagrees, adding that he recently saw Silvestri's early professional work. "He was trying to make a point about how we're going to improve. And the stuff was incredible. We're like, 'Yeah, you're really encouraging us now.'"

But back to Finch. "Dave has turned a corner," Silvestri says. "If you're lucky, once or twice a year, something clicks, and you see things clearer all of a sudden. There's that weird-ass chemical that screws us artists up, that makes us hard to live with, that makes us hard on ourselves. That all balances out for a few seconds."

Upstairs, in what the staff accurately terms his "palatial" office, Silvestri has black, oversized furniture; the couch doubles as his bed, since he frequently sleeps at the studio. On the glass table are resin figures of comic book characters, a Franklin Mint Looney Tunes chess set, a Magic Eight Ball, and Snapple iced tea, on the floor are toy cars and piles of drawings; on a metal stand is Silvestri's towel, drying.

"I use this to make all my decisions," Silvestri says, picking up the Eight Ball. "Is this interview going to be a slam job on me?" he asks it, and shakes. "Oooh," he says, his expression taking on newfound suspicion. "It is certain."

Now that Top Cow is branching out into other media—feature films, animation, toys—Silvestri spends four or five hours a day in meetings, strategizing about how—or how not—to use the characters. "We can stop a million dollar development right in its tracks. If I'm not happy with a toy, if I don't feel I'm going to have a good time playing with it, why would anybody else?

"I'm not a suit running a company, and the people we're doing business with like that. There's no corporate red tape. They don't have to find me. If they want to ask me a question, they call me on the phone. 'Do you like the color of this toy? Do you like the way the character looks in this cartoon?' And I can say yes or no."

When he's not in real meetings, Silvestri is in ad hoc ones. Dave Wohl catches him on his way downstairs. "I'm writing this climactic battle scene at the end [of the *Cyberforce Annual*], and they go to this warehouse, and I don't know whether to have my fight be big robot guys or actual S.H.O.C. guys like Killjoy, who happen to show up there," Dave explains.

"I would say, keeping in the theme, you'll probably have to have them battle through the first line of defense of robotic things," Silvestri says.

"Ballistic shut down the power," Dave clarifies. "So the first line of defense is shut down automatically."

Marc: "She shut down the entire complex?"

Dave: "Yeah, temporarily."

Marc: "She pulled the plug? OK, have them plow through a first line of defense of robots fast."

Dave: I can't let them get there and say, 'This is too easy'?

Marc: Even if they have to fight through robots it should be too easy. It shouldn't be so easy that they just walk into a place and say, 'Oh, this is too easy,' because, obviously, that's too easy. Have them do something superheroic and still say, 'Boy, that was too easy because we're superheroic.' Then the S.H.O.C. guys come in. Who're we going to use? Buzzcut and Killjoy? Actually, you know what? We need somebody else in there. Have them come up with like, Mega-S.H.O.C. guy, some new guy."

Dave (suggesting a new guy): "It could be like, that's what they're using this warehouse for, to create this new guy. It could

MILKING THE COW

Top Cow's '99 releases and beyond. By Michael Berry

[illegible] "Assault with a Deadly Woman" story arc (soon to [illegible] *Cyberforce* switches into a more con- [illegible] the group's members come to grips with the trio [illegible] Also, the evil members of Cyber- [illegible] most formidable set of weapons yet, [illegible] BLIMMER, and his/its army of invulner- [illegible] Top Cow head honcho and [illegible] Marc Silvestri is taking a break from the title with [illegible] However he will be co-penciling #14 [illegible] (*Cyberforce Annual* penciler) will [illegible] charts, with Batt continuing as inker. [illegible] Silvestri [illegible] to work on a secretive two-year- [illegible] project, with [illegible] the title with Finch's *Cyberforce* work.

Silvestri will also be involved with *The Darkness*, a new series [illegible] this fall with [illegible] creative team. The first [illegible] of this new title's storyline can be found in issues #13 [illegible] of both *Cyberforce* and *Codename: Stryke Force*.

Each issue in the top-priority *Stryke*, *Kill Razor*, *Vampirella*, and *Black Angel* is an upcoming *Codename: Stryke Force* storyline, as [illegible] many high-cost assignments has brought the group to the brink of bankruptcy. Meanwhile, a special zero issue explores the roots of the team, with penciler Anthony Winn stepping in for Billy Tan on that issue. Mike Heisler will continue to script the title, with Tan [illegible] penciler, and Duy Truong as inker.

Following the new four-issue *Ripclaw* [illegible] by Ron Silvestri and Brandon Peterson, Marc Silvestri and artist Jordan Raskin [illegible] a *Ripclaw Special*, and then Al Vey joins Silvestri and Winn [illegible] series inker on an ongoing monthly series.

Later this spring, veteran creative team [illegible] writes the new series *Weapon Zero*. The backstory for this [illegible] up instigated back in 1969 when Americans [illegible] moon, but didn't tell everyone exactly what they [illegible] series, which chronicles a chain of events that began [illegible] years ago, adds a significant element of [illegible] universe. Joe Bentley [illegible] Batt provides the finishes.

Metal is planning [illegible] *Glow*, *Cyblade*, *Stryker*, and [illegible] details are pretty sketchy [illegible] related to [illegible] should see the release [illegible] Electronic Publishing [illegible] acters, will be available on all platforms.

even be Cyblade's brother."

Marc: Ahhh. Yeah. OK, use Joe [Benitez]'s design. Make him big and bad. We'll have to think of some kind of power for him, some unique power we haven't used yet. I mean, he's armored, he looks bad. He's got all these blades sticking out of him, 'cause everything Joe does has blades sticking out. And we'll figure out some power.

Dave: Some electrical power.

Marc: Some cool computer thing.

Dave (describing the warehouse): He made it look like Three Mile Island. It looks like a nuclear reactor. That's cool, I guess they need nuclear stuff.

Marc: Yeah! Forget all that super-energy stuff we've been building up to all this time. That's nuclear power.

Despite the nice office, Silvestri's more likely to work downstairs, along with the unwashed (not entirely figurative) masses. "Marc has no ego," says artist Brandon Peterson. "I've worked with guys who have various levels of ego, and I know my own ego, and I have more ego than Marc has. There was a satire comic of all the Image people when it first started [called *Splitting Image*], and they kept having Marc as the perfect guy."

"Pfff," Silvestri says to the idea that he lacks ego. "Who said that?" He turns around, and everybody is watching him. So Silvestri pontificates. "Everybody has ego," he says. "Ego drives you to great things, whether it's in art, finance, or world leadership. The reason man takes one step in front of another is because he wants to accomplish something. You go to the moon because you want to be the first guy on the moon. That's because of our egos. That's what drives civilization."

Breath. "But you can't come in here with the attitude like, 'I'm the man.' I can deal with different personalities. What I can't deal with is somebody who thinks they're already great."

David Finch steps in. "It's like having enough of an ego to think that you can be the best, but not being so egotistical that you think you're already there."

Silvestri clops. "Perfect! Did you get that?"

An artist jumps through one of two cutouts in the wall connecting the main room to the computer room. Silvestri takes the more conventional route around the corner, threading through an elaborate, three-fan system designed to keep the computer room cool. A dozen tracking clipboards labeled "List O Stuff" hang on the wall. All are empty. Silvestri wants to know why, and no one can tell him. On the opposite wall is a piece of paper with various lipstick kisses on it. Silvestri once wanted to know about that too, but nobody could tell him.

It's time for the photo session, so the lights are turned off, and the room glows with monitor screens and a single, yellow spotlight. Silvestri points at a stylized biceps on the screen. Flash, snap. "OK, Marc, put your finger a little higher, maybe," says the photographer. Silvestri obliges, inserting his finger up a nostril.

The photographer instructs him to interact with Brian Haberlin, who's in charge of the computer room. Silvestri agrees, rubbing

Haberlin's shoulder in mock sensuality. Next they saw their hands back and forth, to create a smear effect, as if reaching for the screen. They saw for several minutes. "So," Silvestri says to Haberlin, "do you feel pretty stupid?" They saw some more. "It's a small world after all," Silvestri sings, off-key.

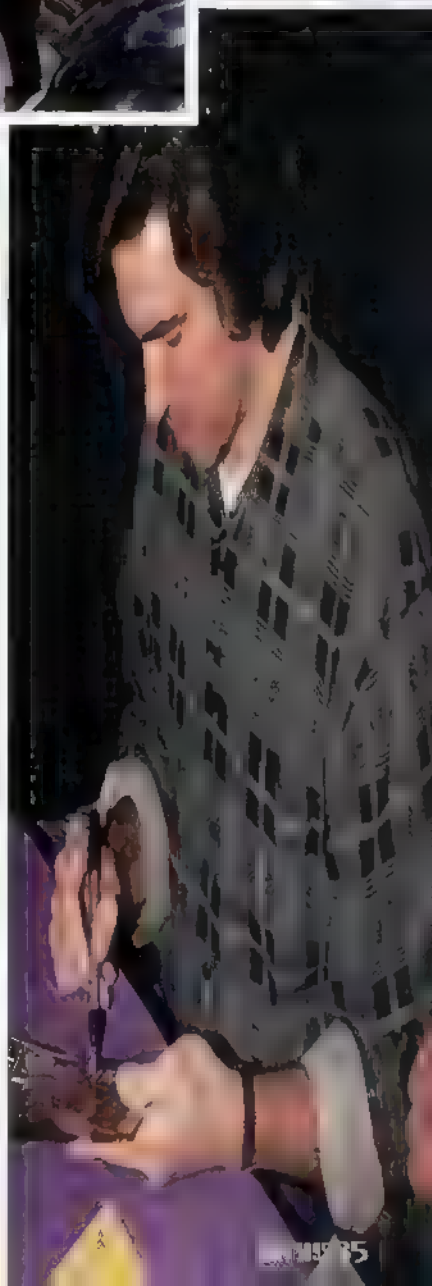
The photo session continues for a couple of hours, and Silvestri is dragging by the end. "You want me in this picture?" he asks, hopeful for a break. Everybody laughs. "Yeah," says the photographer. "You're in every picture."

Silvestri does get a break during the second book signing session later in the day. "Hey, we drove right by Virgin Records," Silvestri says. "[Director] John Woo was signing!" Outraged "No ways" bubble up; they're all John Woo fanatics, and might have even waited in line for that. Someone says: "Right now, John Woo is like, 'Marc Silvestri is signing down the street!'"

The lull in autographing activity stretches on too long. "I got a hot pen, hot pen," Silvestri says. "Need to sign. Need to sign. Step up! Let us humiliate you," he says. He swoops out his signature, and the silver metallic pen explodes on him.

At 5:15, fifteen minutes after the two-hour session was scheduled to end, the store manager tells Silvestri, "There's only about two hours worth of people left." Silvestri sighs and blots his pen. They're not leaving, so neither is he. ★

Diane Bailey is a freelance writer from South Pasadena, CA, who specializes in celebrity profiles.

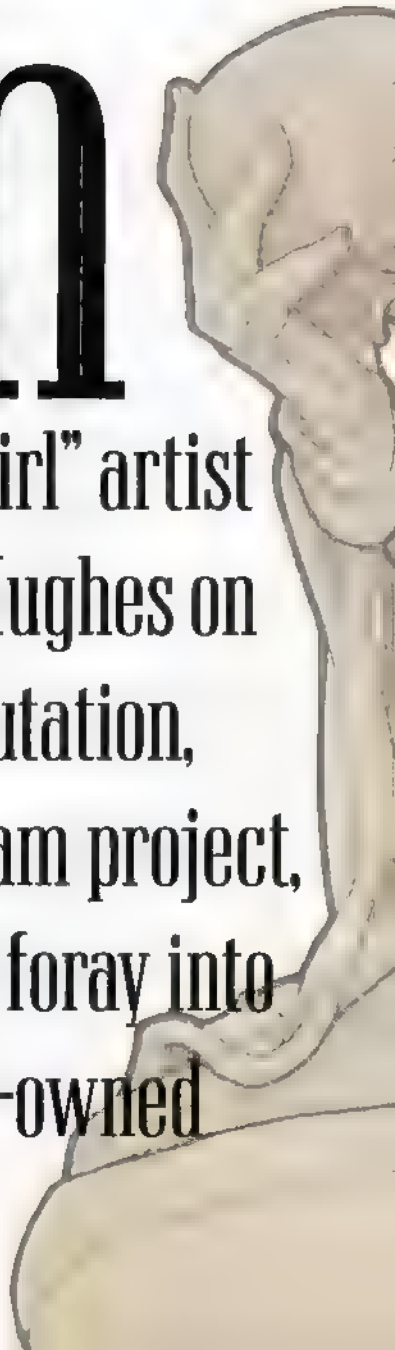


Lady's Man

by Jack Curtin

Photo © 1995 Jim Gund

"Good Girl" artist Adam Hughes on his reputation, his dream project, and his foray into creator-owned comics.



Dark Horse's beautiful heroine from beyond the grave, Ghost

The first time he saw the tag "Good Girl Artist" attached to his name in a comics publication, Adam Hughes was actually kind of surprised. "I hadn't really noticed or thought about the fact that I had produced a body of work along those lines," he says. "Then I thought, 'Wow! That's pretty cool, to be famous for drawing pretty women.'"

Hughes has a flair for glamorizing the female figure. That, in part, is why his *Ghost* series, due from Dark Horse Comics in April, is so eagerly anticipated. So you shouldn't be too surprised that *Ghost*'s title character is One Hot Babe, with two exceptions to the rule: she's dead, and she's packing a pair of big .45 caliber pistols.

"I know that *Ghost* is probably going to be a semi-controversial book at times, at least partially because of my reputation," he admits, "but I suspect a lot of people are going to be surprised—not disappointed, I hope—at my approach to the book. I think of this as a crime comic. Something very cinematic, filled with *noir* elements. I see a character who is the female equivalent of Batman, or the Shadow, and that means I'll be going for a more gothic atmosphere in the book, a dark and menacing look. Drawing Ghost with her breasts hanging out or standing with her hip jutting and looking all pin-upy would be a real disservice to the character. My tendency is to show her totally wrapped in her cloak more often than not, looking mysterious."

Hughes, who appears even younger than his 27 years, has been part of Gaijin Studios, a partnership of bright young comics talent based in Atlanta, Ga. (see sidebar story), since the studio was formed in 1991. "I came to Atlanta to work with [inker] Karl Story and to learn from [artist] Brian Stelfreeze," he says, referring to two of his partners. "I like the companionship, I like being around other professionals, and for somebody like me who's easily distracted and who tends to be a slow worker, it helps keep me focused."

Dressed all in black, as is his custom—it's not an affection, he says, "it's just that I'm a little heavy, and anybody who's heavy and dresses in light colors is asking for trouble"—Hughes gives a tour of his studio. His work space is in the large rear studio area of Gaijin's digs. Sitting across from him, artist Jason Pearson sits with headphones on, hard at work and oblivious to all the activity around him. Next to him, Stelfreeze alternates between his drawing board and conversations with Batman editors in New York about a revamp of Nightwing's costume. Others will wander in and out as the day progresses.

Hughes's area is cramped and cluttered enough to create a problem for the claustrophobic. "It looks like I work in a closet," he would mutter later in the afternoon, after glancing at a test Polaroid shot by a magazine photographer. A half-finished poster featuring a bevy of sexy

GHOST™ & © Dark Horse Comics.

heroines from *Penthouse Comix* is on the drawing board, cover art for the first three issues of *Ghost* is on the wall, and art for a recently finished Catwoman T-shirt for Graphitti Designs is pinned to the left and above those. He points to the latter. "I spent five days on that piece," he says, "and I realized when I finished that this was the best Catwoman I could ever do. Sometimes you do a piece and you know that you'll never really need to draw that character again, because you got it just right."

He pulls a plugged and non-functional .45 automatic pistol from the shelves above the desk. "I try to be as accurate as I can with props and settings," he explains, "so I went out and bought this as soon as I knew I'd be doing *Ghost*. This is the gun she would use." The weapon is shoved back into place as he pushes aside a stack of tapes of old Shadow radio shows in order to clear enough room to display the completed pages for the first issue of *Ghost* and some of his favorite cover and trading card work. While the to-do list on Hughes's desk is lengthy and punctuated at the top with this warning: "Take one more job and I will kill you!", Hughes is apologetic. "I just accept too many jobs," laments Hughes, "but I've forsworn all that, now that I've taken on *Ghost*. Still, I have to get all this stuff done...."

Hughes has been getting stuff done since he began drawing professionally eight years ago, when he was 19. If his career hasn't been exactly meteoric, it certainly has gone a lot smoother than most. "For some reason, I never had to go through that period of rejection and denial that a lot of people have to endure when they're struggling to get started," he says. "I just sort of became a professional almost by accident."

Fired from his job building electrical transformers, Hughes showed his portfolio to writer-artist Mark Wheatley at a 1987 convention in his native New Jersey. "I didn't think I was ready to go professional yet; I was just looking for a critique. After giving me a fairly scathing one just to see me squirm, Mark says, 'So, do you want some work?' He gave me a job finishing his pencils for a *Blood of Dracula* story for Apple Comics and, from that point on, I've always had at least some work in comics."

Impressive, especially when you discover that Hughes is entirely self-taught. "I started drawing when I was five, like a lot of kids do," he says. "I just never stopped. My first comic was *Fantastic Four* #81, so I started out a big Jack Kirby fan—who didn't? The guys I really aped and tried to learn from, though, were George Pérez and John Byrne. Especially Byrne. I was his ideal target audience when he took over the X-Men, [at] just about age 11."

Hughes took on the Wheatley assignment, and was working at a small comics shop when he began to expand his comics horizons, by adding independents to his regular reading list. "I picked up [First Comics's] *Nexus*, because it sort of looked

DC Comics/Vertigo/Paradox Press and Nexus ™ & © Pacific Comics/Graphic Enterprises, Inc.

Above: Ghost packs a pair of .45s on the cover to the ongoing *Ghost* #1.
Left: This is one of the few panels from *Penthouse Comix* that our moms would let us show.

like a superhero book, and [Fantagraphics Books's] *Love and Rockets*, because, well, it had this girl with really big boobs on the cover and I was 19, y'know?

"When I saw what [*Nexus* artist] Steve Rude was doing and the Hernandez brothers were doing [on *Love and Rockets*], especially Jaime, I was amazed. I started thinking about comic book art in a whole new way, so I guess you can credit those two guys for keeping me from becoming just another mindless spandexed superhero artist."

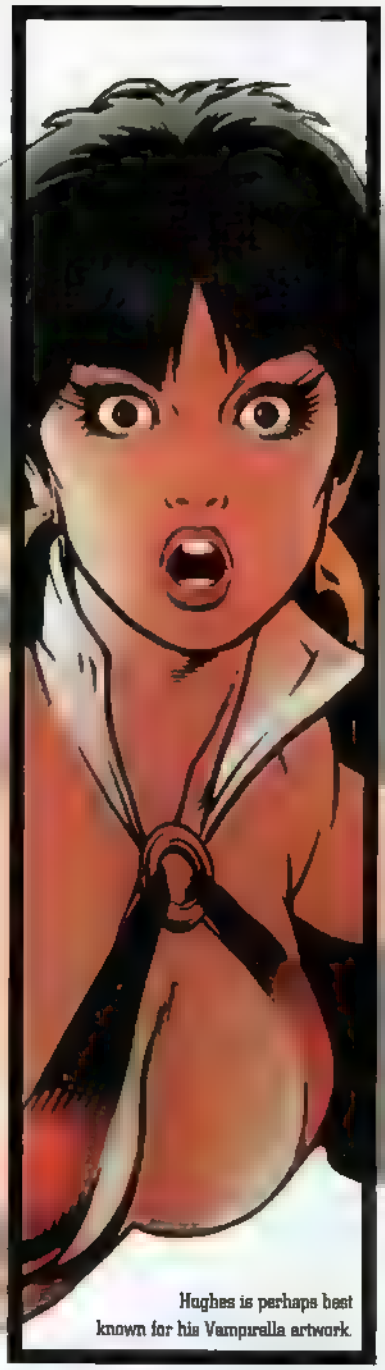
Not long after, editor Diana Schutz of Comico Comics, to whom he had shown his work at a Philadelphia convention, offered him the art assignment on writer Mike W. Barr's *Maze Agency*. "I tell anybody who asks me how to get into comics, just take your portfolio to conventions and show it to professionals," he says, not surprisingly.

He cut his comic shop job back to twice a week, and happily accepted working on the title through its Comico run, later doing a couple of stories and covers after it moved to Innovation following Comico's collapse.

With that steady gig and other work coming his way, Hughes moved out of his family's home and into his own New Jersey apartment in February 1989. Within days of the move, he returned from a West Coast signing tour to find a waiting phone message from editor Michael Eury: *Maze Agency*'s been canceled, stop working. "I was halfway panicked," he recalls, "especially after I called Mike and he asked me not to say anything for a few days because they hadn't caught up with everybody to tell them about [the book] being canceled. I said OK, but I had to find some work. Then, I swear, it wasn't a half-hour later when the phone rings and it's [DC Comics editor] Andy Helfer. He'd been asking me for a couple of months when I was going to be free, because he wanted to use me on *Justice League America*." Now that Hughes was actually free, he accepted Helfer's offer.

"It was an incredibly educational experience, working off of [plotter-breakdown artist] Keith Giffen's layouts," he says of his *JLA* tenure. "I learned more about storytelling during my 12 issues on *Justice League* that I ever did before or since. And it wasn't as scary as it might have been for a relatively new artist because, let's face it, for their entire 60-issue run, it was always the Helfer-Giffen-[J. M.] DeMatteis Justice League. They were the reason for its success. More than any other book I can think of, that was one where the penciler was actually the most interchangeable part of the mix. Those three created the stories, Bob Lappan lettered every one, Gene D'Angelo colored every one—only the penciler changed."

Since finishing his *Justice League* commitment, Hughes hadn't taken on a regular assignment before accepting *Ghost*. He concentrated instead on doing a variety of pin-ups, trading cards, and covers for most of the major companies. "One of my big heroes is [artist] Dave Stevens," he explains, "and I saw how he and [artist] Brian Bolland are guys who made cover art an integral part of their careers. I found that doing covers or single illustrations fit in nicely with the way I work."



Hughes is perhaps best known for his Vampirella artwork.

Not that he left the storytelling phase of comics entirely. There was, for example, *Star Trek: Debt of Honor*, the Chris Claremont-penned graphic novel, "which took 10 months of my life. *Star Trek* is the one thing from my childhood that I really wanted to draw. When I was 10, I wrote and drew my own *Star Trek* comic, in which Captain Kirk met God—which made *Star Trek V* a very interesting movie for me." He also took on a few other assignments, including a brief fling with DC's *Legionnaires* as a possible ongoing gig. "I did #7, a couple of covers, and some fill-in pages on a couple of issues," he says, "but it just didn't pan out as a regular thing."

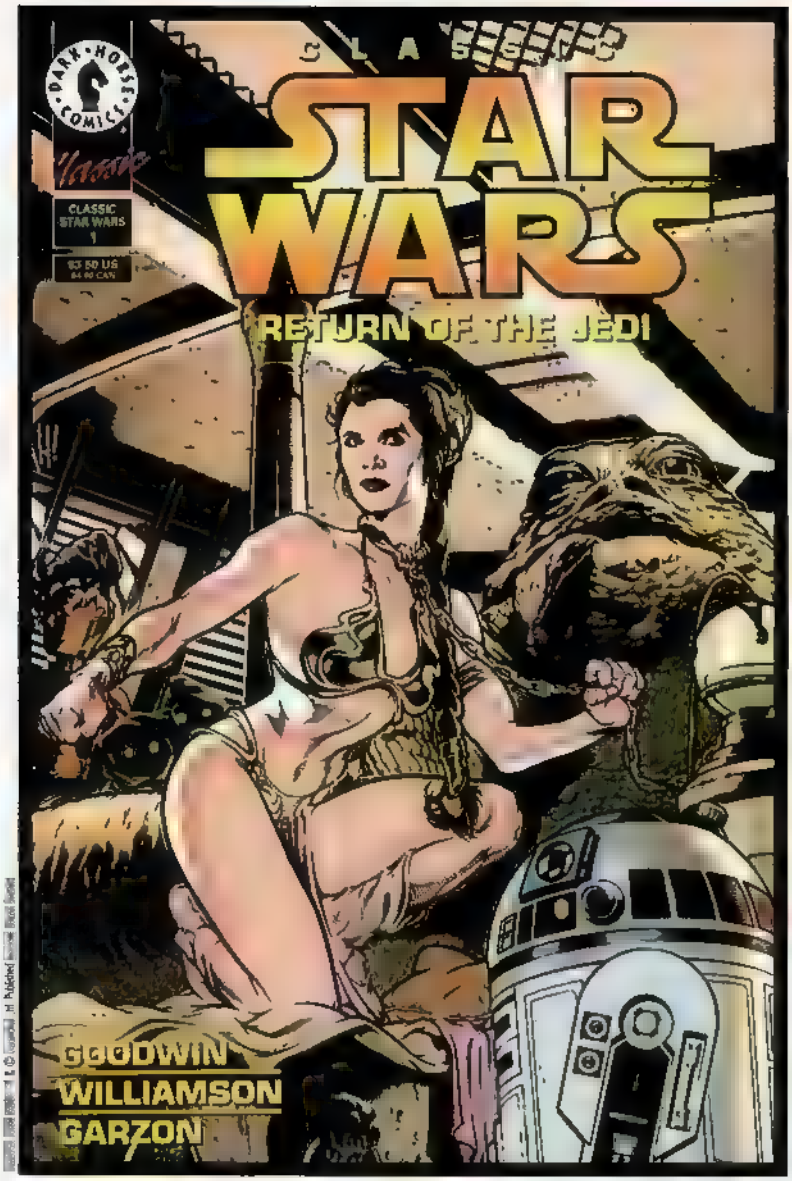
But cover assignments are what kept Hughes a fan favorite in recent years. His favorites among them? "Well, my *Vampirella* covers for Harris Comics have been some of the most popular ones with fans," he says, "but I'd say the two I enjoyed most are ones I did fairly recently. [Marvel Comics editor] Suzanne Gaffney gave me a free hand on *X-Men: The Early Years* #12; she asked what I wanted to do, and I said immediately, 'Class picture.' So I drew Professor X sitting in the foreground—I modeled him after Yul Brenner—and the five original X-Men standing behind him. I tried to give each one the personality he or she had in those early stories. Scott is so thin that you know right away why he was 'Slim' Summers in those days. Hank is carrying a load of books, and he has such long arms that he can carry more books than anybody. Jean is obviously the only girl in school—I just had so much fun with that.

"My all-time favorite is the cover to *Classic Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* #1 for Dark Horse. I think that's the best likeness I ever pulled off. Princess Leia in her little 'John Carter of Mars slave girl' outfit in the foreground and Jabba the Hutt in the background with his tongue hanging out. I really like that one. Plus, I colored it, too, and the computer colorist at Dark Horse followed my colors to the letter. That may be the one cover I've done where I wouldn't change a thing."

Penthouse Comix's "Young Captain Adventure" serial actually marked Hughes's return to regular comics storytelling last year, although the adult venue is one that many fans will never see. "I guess you could call it a brief flirtation with the dark side," he laughs. "It doesn't seem to have hurt me any, although I had some apprehensions. It's one of the few times in my career I've done something strictly for a buck. Then again, since it meant I got to appear regularly in the same book as Kevin Nowlan—and I think Kevin is God's other son when it comes to comic book art—it was actually a pretty good idea."

Accepting *Ghost* or some other ongoing assignment was something he felt he had to do in order to keep his career flourishing, Hughes says. "I need to flex my muscles, to prove to myself and others that I can keep up with a regular series, especially because I have a couple of ideas for stories I'd like to write and because of my creator-owned project under Gaijin's Blanc Noir imprint [for Dark Horse].

VAMPIRELLA ™ & © Harris Publications, Inc.



This *Star Wars* cover is Hughes's all-time personal favorite.

Ghost is a perfect situation for me."

Hughes reunites with editor Michael Eury on *Ghost*, and Eury has set things up so that the art team of Matt Haley and Tom Simmons, who did the *Ghost Special* last year—an issue for which Hughes did the cover—will do every fourth issue, leaving Hughes and inker Mark Farmer a cushion in maintaining the schedule

"Matt tends to show a lot more skin than I do in this series," laughs Hughes, "so my fans ought to be happy with the arrangement."

The book's star herself is not a superheroine, he says, and Eric Luke, who returns to script the series after his debut on last year's special, isn't writing her that way

"She's almost an antiheroine; I get the feeling sometimes that if it were cops who were standing in her way or not answering her questions, she'd gun them down just as readily as she does the bad guys."

Just because he's taking a less glamour-oriented approach to *Ghost* doesn't mean he's rejecting his Good Girl Art reputation, Hughes stresses. "It's certainly part of what I do and helped get me where I am," he says. "I'd hate to think of it as if I'm doing anything destructive or demeaning I actually think it's kind of old-fashioned and nostalgic, reflecting the way comics were done in more innocent times." Still, as he feared, it sometimes causes some controversy

"It's all Eric's fault," he laughs. "He's great to work with because, being a screenwriter, he thinks in very visual terms, but, man, is he giving me some wild stories to draw. Maybe it's because he knows my reputation for doing sexy stuff, but in the first issue Ghost's sister gets involved in a pornography ring, in the second one there's this big fight scene that takes place in a striptease club, and in the third issue—I don't want to give anything away—[let's] just say she's being demeaned by the villain and has to overcome that.

"Anyway, I just sent in the artwork on the strip club sequence and got a call from Mike [Eury] saying that some of the women at Dark Horse were a little upset by it, because it's a strip club and I show strippers there doing what strippers do, which is take their clothes off. I was bothered by that at first, but then I got to thinking—women should be upset by a strip club. If I drew a strip club that didn't bother them, then I wouldn't be doing my job. A reader, especially a woman, who feels that way is in exactly the right mood to read the story, because Ghost herself is offended by the club and what goes on there."

Like most artists, Hughes has a roster of favorite characters he would like to work with some day. "I'd probably drop everything in a minute if somebody were going to write an *X-Men. Year One* book and asked me to illustrate it," he confesses. "I'd love to do a World War II quarterly [comic] which had a Captain America story, an Invaders story, and a Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos story each issue."

But it is his Indiana Jones story concept that is closest to his heart. "People who know me will chuckle when they read this," he promises, "since they've been hearing about it since 1990, but I came up with this story and proposal; everybody who's seen it likes it and thinks it would work. Even the people at [Indiana Jones owner] Lucasfilms like it. Just like the movies have been basically homages to the old Republic serials, I devised a story which is a homage to the great old adventure comics of days gone by. It's sitting on the shelf at Dark Horse Comics right now, until I can afford to take all the time necessary to do the [required] research, but I'll get it done someday."

Every ambitious comic creator today also has a creator-owned project or two in mind, and Hughes is no exception. For instance: All American Girl When Dynamic Forces, a card company, invited artists to create sets of heroes and villains, offering to buy one-time rights to use the characters and leave the copyright and trademark in the hands of the creators, "It was too good a deal to pass up," he remembers. "Everybody in the studio was creating characters, but I'd never done that before and was kind of baffled. Finally, I decided that I'd always liked Captain America and World War II, so I'd do something like that."

All American Girl, as Hughes explains it, is the former sidekick of a 1930s heroine, Memphis Belle, who dies in battle with her arch-enemy, the Krimsson Kaisser.

With her last breath, Belle passes on "the untested vitamin X" to her kid sidekick, who quickly consumes it and develops into "the all-powerful All American Girl," says Hughes in a deep, portentous voice, "sort of a Mary Mar-

Ragin' Gaijin

[illegible] Studios was assembled by a group of young comics [illegible] who decided they enjoyed one another's company enough to relocate to Atlanta and work [illegible] together [illegible] The idea was hatched [illegible] Charlotte, North Carolina [illegible] 1993 [illegible] bunch of us who would hang out at conventions together all the time [illegible] Adam Hughes, Gaijin, Instead of going out partying [illegible] night when the conventions were done for the day, we would go back to our rooms and [illegible] the conversation going, just keep on working. About thirteen [illegible] morning, somebody suggested it would be cool if we all got together and formed a studio so we could do it all the time.

The idea was aired upon by Brian Stelfreeze, the long-time *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* cover artist for DC Comics who lived in Atlanta and found appropriate space in a small business complex on the northern edge of the Greater Atlanta area. Also joining forces were artist Joe Phillips (*Mr. Miracle*), inker Karl Story (various projects for all major publishers), Hughes, Cully Hamner (DC's *Green Lantern: Mosaic*), Tony Harris (DC's *Starman*), Dave Johnson (Image's *SuperPatriot*), Jason Pearson (Image's *Savage Dragon: Blood & Guts*), and Christine "Shen" Welch, a painter and fine artist who shares the studio and has done some comic work in the past. Harris, Johnson, and Phillips have since moved on, and Jason Martin (various titles) and Rick Mays (Marvel's *Nomad*) have come on board.

Gaijin is essentially a cooperative, with each member working on their own projects and sharing in expenses and planning. "We vote on everything that affects the studio," says Hughes.

One such vote led to negotiations and ultimately a contract with Dark Horse Comics to develop Blanc Noir, a line of creator-owned comics similar to the successful Legend imprint. No definite publication date has been established at this point, but several projected mini-series are under way.

The plan is to have one series appear as a six-page back-up in the pages of another, then vice versa, similar to Legend's Hellboy-Monkeyman & O'Brien arrangement. Its first time out, for example, Pearson's *Bodybags*, a four-issue superhero action/adventure series, will have *Maximum Velocity*, a hard-boiled science-fiction tale written and drawn by Stelfreeze and inked by Story, as a backup. Hamner's *Brave*, an action/crime comic, will be backed by Hughes's *Invertigo*. Phillips and Johnson are part of Blanc Noir and are also working on creator-owned titles (*The Heretic* and *Beta*, respectively).

vel on steroids." "Develops" is apparently the operative word here: Hughes showed his sketches to his pal, Kurt Busiek, writer of *Marvels*, "and he looked at her for a minute and said 'All American Girl she's giving the war a whole new front.' He said I could have that for my promotional campaign."

Closer to fruition is *Invertigo*, Hughes's project for Gaijin's Blanc Noir imprint. The series will begin as a six-page backup in Cully Hamner's four-issue *Brave*, then appear as a mini-series of its own. "I sort of explore the J. Jonah Jameson theory that if there were no superheroes, there would be no supervillains," he explains. "In the series of backup stories, we meet Olympia, who is your standard, run-of-the-mill Earth's Greatest Heroine type. In the final sequence, where she is engaged in a fight to the finish with her greatest enemy, a battle she must win or the earth dies screaming, she....loses. And, as she's dying, she thinks that thought everybody has. 'If only I had known what was going to happen, I'd do it differently and make it all better.'

"Then she wakes up at the beginning of her own series, and she's 14 years old again, 11 years in the past, and she gets to live her life over, fully aware of everything that happened or is going to happen and free to change it if she can. The book is basically about second chances, and how, even if you get a second chance and have the benefit of hindsight, that doesn't always mean you're going to succeed or that things won't turn out just as badly—or worse. Anyway, what she decides is not to adopt her superheroine identity, to use her powers behind the scenes, in secret. What she finds is that, yes, there are no more supervillains, but those who were villains are still there, still doing evil, only now they're politicians or businessmen. So she has to fight them still, plus decide what things she can change from the past and what she can't. Meanwhile, she has to try to find her archenemy, whose identity she never knew, and stop him before he destroys the world again."

That's the basic storyline, but Hughes has grander ambitions, as well. "I want this to also be a satire on what's passing for superheroes these days," he says. "I designed Olympia to be as tacky as possible—a skimpy purple and gold costume with a big cut-out 'O' on the chest, gloves with tassels, the whole bit. I like to think that, if I do this right, I can poke fun at myself and the whole 'Good Girl' thing, and comment on the nature of comics and superheroes."

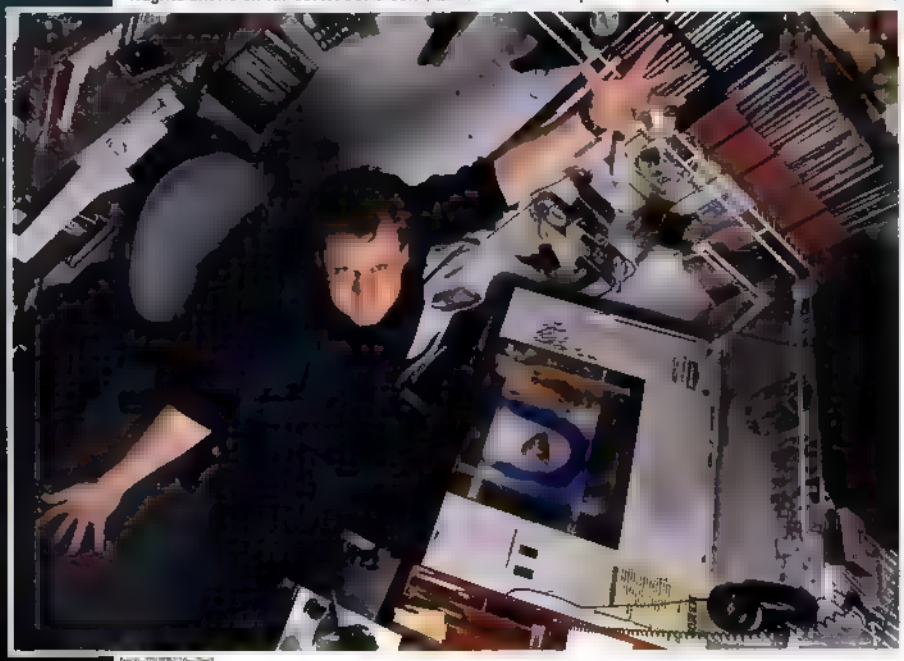
But what happens, he is asked, if the readers don't get it? If they like Olympia and clamor for her return? What if all they see is another big-breasted superheroine?

"I've thought about that," says Hughes after a moment. "But I would hope that there are people out there who will take me seriously enough to say, 'OK, he likes to draw pretty women, but there's some substance to all this, too.' If you scratch away the surface, you can see that there's something else going on."

He pauses again and smiles. "You know, that's probably why I want to do this story," concludes Hughes. "I just want to scratch away at the surface and see if there's any substance there." ★

Jack Curtin is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia, Pa.

Hughes shows off his cavernous studio (notice the towel-draped mannequin used as a model for Ghost).



MTV to the Maxx

By Paul J. Grant

Sam Kieth's *The Maxx* joins MTV's animated *Oddities* roster.

Fans of Sam Kieth's The Maxx comic will no doubt be glued to their TVs on Saturday April 8, 1995, because at 1 p.m. (EST/PST) *MTV Oddities* will debut its animated version of Kieth's comic as part of MTV's Animation Weekend. The series, set to last for seven episodes, will begin airing in its regular time slot on Monday, April 10 at 10 p.m. (EST/PST).

Writer-artist Kieth always dreamed of his Image Comics creation becoming a cartoon, but it "didn't seem appropriate for Saturday morning, and there's not many places that show animated cartoons with more adult subject matter."

Fate stepped in when Abby Terkuhle, MTV's senior vice president for on-air creative and animation, walked into a Manhattan art gallery displaying comic book art. One of Kieth's drawings caught his eye, and the gallery's proprietor suggested he check out *The Maxx*. Terkuhle did, and found the story fit in with MTV's mandate in developing animation for adults, such as *Liquid Television* and *Beavis and Butt-Head*.

"What I liked about *The Maxx* is that it was not your typical superhero story," Terkuhle explains. "It takes all the conventions of a typical superhero comic and, as it unfolds, sort of turns them upside down. It also deals with a lot of sociological issues that superhero comics don't, such as the fact that he's a homeless guy."

The first seven episodes of the *Maxx* will adapt the first 11 issues of the comic book. According to Kieth, "By and large, minus a few words here and there and a few added scenes, it's straight from the comic, using the original dialogue, the original characters, and the original character designs."

The animation for the first seven episodes is being produced by Rough Draft Studios, the studio that also animates *Beavis and Butt-Head*. But how does the series' creator like what he's seen so far? As of late February, Kieth had seen three complete episodes and was generally quite happy, aside from a few things he wanted changed. It was then that he ran up against one of the realities of the animation business. "When I draw a page, it's a couple of days' work," he observes, "but when you animate a sequence, it's weeks of dozens of people working their butts off."

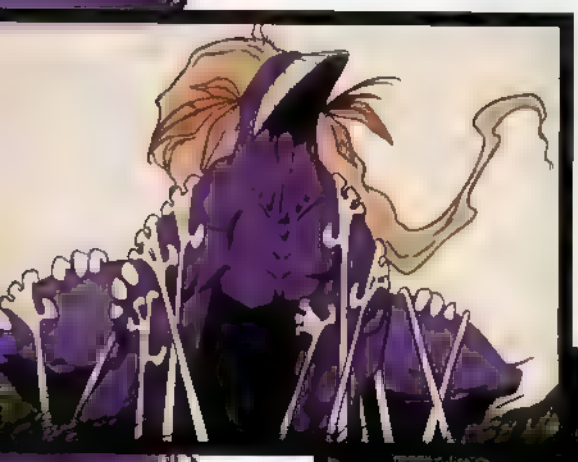
William Messner-Loebs, credited by Kieth as writing *The Maxx*'s "swell dialogue" also worked with the animators.

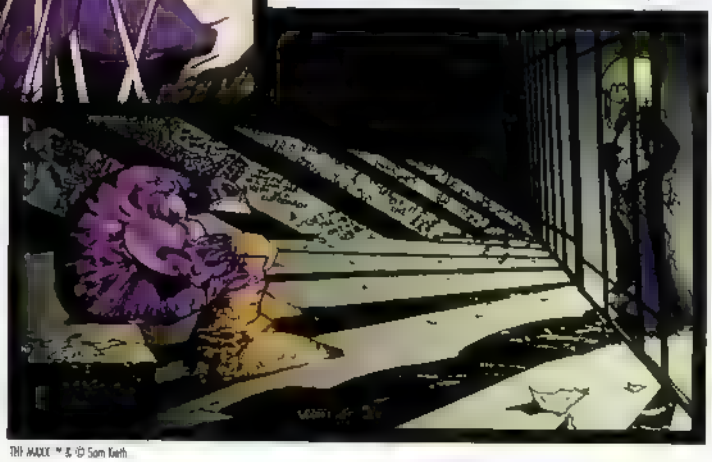
Those viewers unfamiliar with the comic book should be aware that *The Maxx* defies easy categorization. An MTV press release describes the show as "the story of

a homeless superhero for the '90s who alternately inhabits a bleak urban landscape and a bizarre dream world." Even Kieth admits that a high concept version of the storyline eludes him.

"Every time I try to reduce it to a bumper sticker or sound bite, it winds up leaving something out," he concedes. "The closest thing I could think of was that it's Don Quixote, a person stuck in an unpleasant real world who dreams of a world where he has control and power, but keeps returning to unpleasant reality." ★

Paul Grant is a freelance writer. His world of reality is Michigan.





THE MAXX ™ & © Sam Kieth

The Maxx cartoon will feature all the main characters of the comic, such as Maxx (opposite), Julia (at left), and Mr. Gone (above).

Avengers Assemble!!

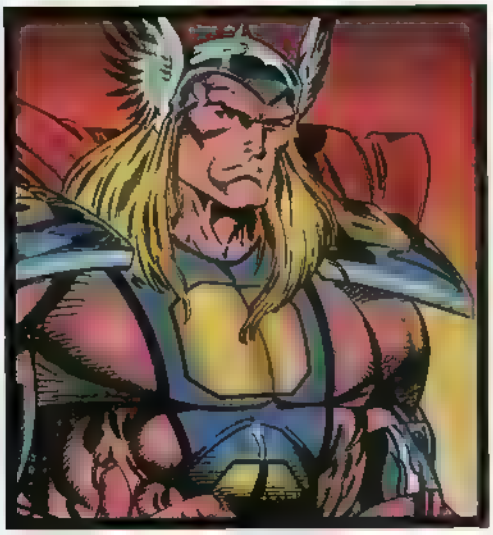
Casting Call 3

Hey, we're back for a third time 'round, and we figger we'd take Earth's Mightiest Heroes, along with a buncha keen supervillain types, and put 'em all in our own make-believe movie! The hell with all a those Hollywood jerks. It seems like the best they can do is make crappy movies like *Howard the Duck* and *Batman Returns* (Those killer penguins were a *real* nice touch!). Directing our epic would be Richard Donner, who's directed such spiffy flicks as the three *Lethal Weapon* movies and *Superman: The Movie*. The special effects would, of course, be by the special FX gods, Industrial Light and Magic. As for who would get cast in this cosmic mix of thespians...

Fox Broadcasting Company

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Cast (by us) as Venom in the Spider-Man movie in *Wizard* #42's Casting Call, Fox TV football analyst **Howie Long** has proven popular enough to warrant another role, that of our star-spangled Avenger. Face it, the guy's built like a friggin' brick house, just as a true super-soldier should be

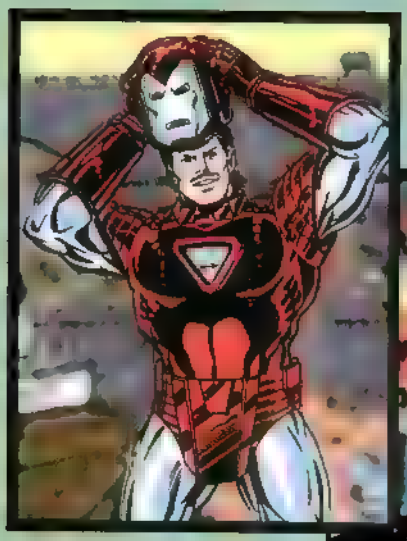


THOR

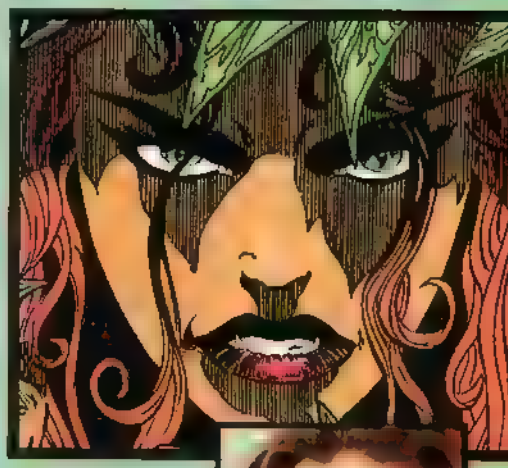
Portraying the pretty boy Thunder God, romance novel cover figure (and author!) **Fabio** would pretty much ace this job. This Italian star of TV's *Acapulco Heat* would have every villainess swooning

BY A BUNCH OF *WIZARD* STAFFERS

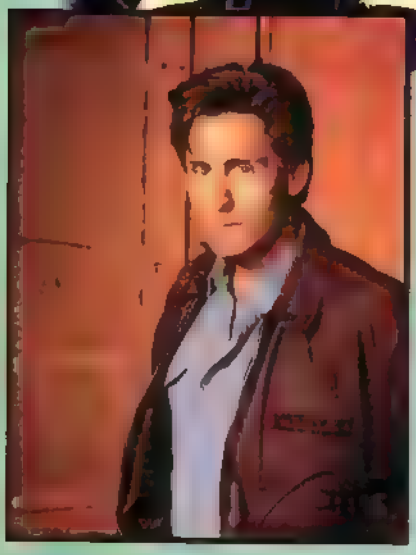
AVENGERS and all characters and artwork shown ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. All photos, Everett Collection unless otherwise noted



IRON MAN
All right! Who better to play gazillionaire playboy Tony Stark than the former James Bond guy, **Timothy Dalton**? He's got the perfect look for ol' Shellhead.



TIGRA
Mrrrrrrawwwwwwllllll . *The Grifters* and *Bugsy*'s **Annette Bening** would be perfectly sexy in her portrayal of the Avengers' resident feline.



HAWKEYE
Emilio Estevez, star of *Freejack*, *Stakeout*, and *Judgment Night*, would hit the bullseye as the hotheaded archer.

SCARLET WITCH
The demure mutant who can put a hex on ya would be played by supermodel **Paulina Porizkova**, who took a stab at acting in the Tom Selleck flick *Her Alibi*. She also gets bonus points for her great Slavic accent, since SW's from that part o' the world, too.

VISION

The stoic **Peter Weller**, star of the first two *Robo-Cop* flicks, would be a great Vision. His deep, monotone voice would sound real spooky, too

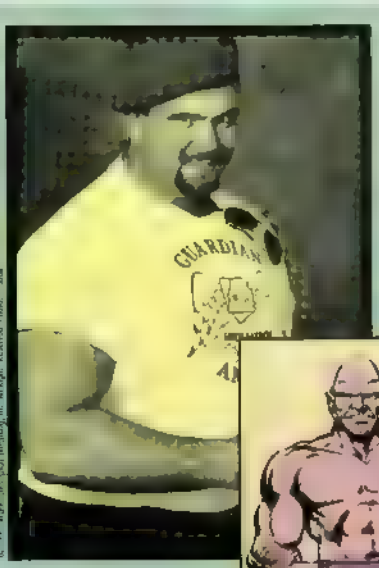
JARVIS

Having already played a butler-type as Higgins in TV's *Magnum P.I.*, **John Hillerman** needs little effort to be the Avengers' ever-so-trusty butler.

And what do Avengers do better than most anybody? Why, beat the beejeezus outta superfoes, of course. So, here's our roster for the Masters of Evil, our heroes' punching bags.

BARON ZEMO

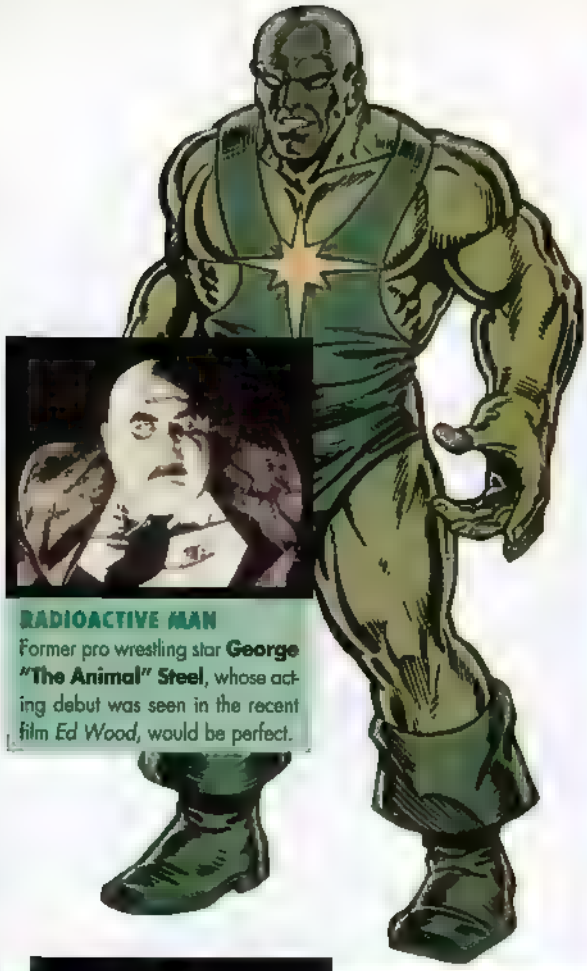
Jurgen Prochnow—y'know, the German guy from *The Seventh Sign* and *Das Boot*—would play Zemo to a T He's got the cool accent and everything.



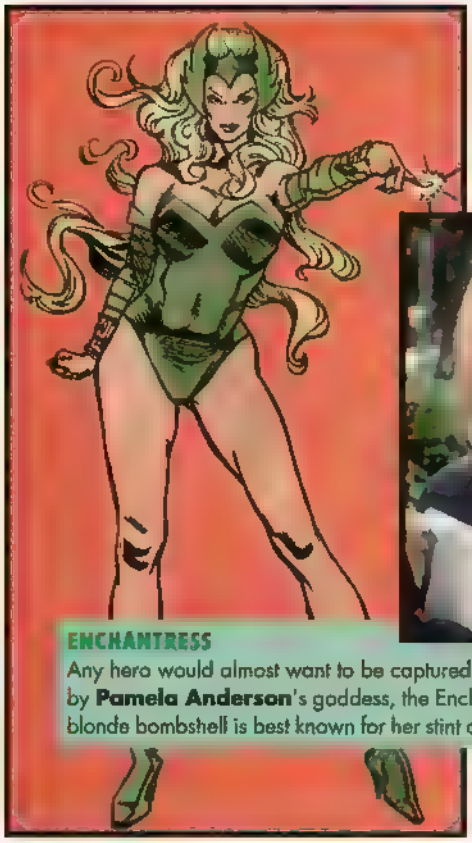
© 94 Vrak Jimpson Wrestling, Inc. All Rights Reserved Photo: Stoll

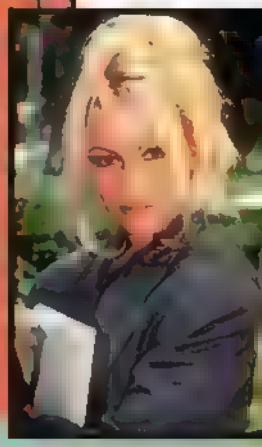
ABSORBING MAN

Nothing makes a movie more than a bald guy with a wrecking ball, and here's ours. Played by professional wrestler **Guardian Angel**, 'Sorby would kick some serious butt!

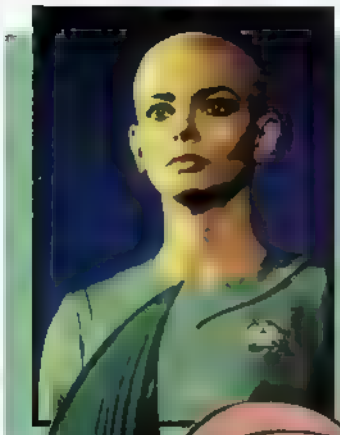


RADIOACTIVE MAN
Former pro wrestling star **George "The Animal" Steel**, whose acting debut was seen in the recent film *Ed Wood*, would be perfect.





ENCHANTRESS
Any hero would almost want to be captured and tortured by **Pamela Anderson**'s goddess, the Enchantress. This blonde bombshell is best known for her stint on *Baywatch*.



MOONDRAGON
Persis Khambatta, Ilia from the first *Star Trek* flick, is a dead ringer for ol' Moony—from back when she was a true bad girl. (Yeah, like there are any other bald chicks in Hollywood.)

EXECUTIONER
He's dead, you say? That's the best part about this stuff—it don't matter a lick. **Andrew Bryniarski**, who recently played Zangief in the abysmal *Street Fighter* flick (and also had a role in *Batman Returns*!), would be *perfecto*!

Well, seeing as how some truly horrific movies have done so well recently (like *StarGate* and *Dumb and Dumber*, to name just two), this movie would rake in like a bajillion smackeroos! And just think of the cool toy line this movie would spawn. It'd be great. Too bad chances of a flick like this ever coming out equal that of an Eddie Murphy comeback film. Ah, but to dream.. ☆

When not plotting the ruination of the comic book industry, the Wizard staff just likes to terrorize the vending machine guy, who only restocks once a year. The weenie.

Can Cap Be Cool?

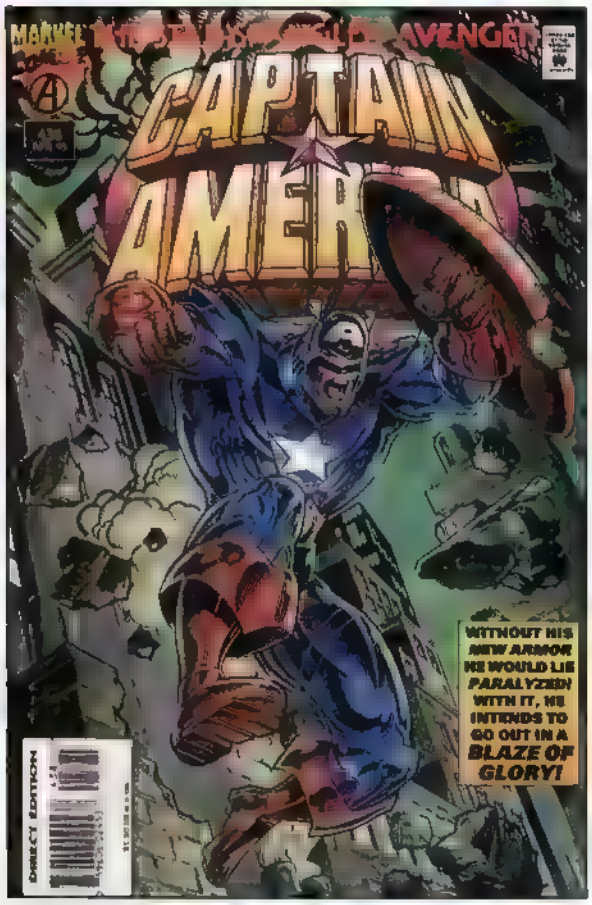
Writer Mark Waid on trying to make Captain America hip, bringing back "old friends," and just who is behind that mask these days.

When Mark Waid takes over the writing chores of *Captain America* with issue #443, he knows he has one formidable challenge. "I have to make Captain America cool."

Cool? Marvel's Joe Patriot? The Star Spangled Stick in the Mud? Is he kidding? "What makes kids look at Captain America as an old fogey is that he looks and acts and talks like your dad," Waid admits. "That's his greatest weakness. No kid thinks his dad is cool."

Changing that image, he stresses, has nothing to do with the character's actual age or his origin rooted in World War II. "Nobody complains about how old Wolverine is supposed to be," he points out. "It's all in the attitude and what you put across. My goal is to make him a little more contemporary and accessible to the kids who are buying the image books. I have to have 15-year-olds going, 'Wow, give me more.' That's going to be the hardest challenge."

That doesn't mean, he rushes to say, that Cap needs a new costume or a fashionably grim 'n' gritty attitude. "My feeling is the same for Captain America as it is for [DC Comics's] Flash. If it ain't broke, don't fix it," he says. "I can be overruled, but my feeling is that there's not a damn thing wrong with Captain America's costume. The trick to making Cap accessible and popular with readers has nothing to do with his costume, and everything to do with who's in the costume and his personality."



CAPTAIN AMERICA ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

In fact, Waid's hot *Flash* book for DC serves as one of several influences for his approach to the shield-slinger. But there's more to it than just adding to his collection of writing about characters with wings on their heads. "Like the Flash, Cap gets up in the morning with the job of being Captain America," he explains. "He loves his job—he's not spurred on by tragedy or angst or guilt. He's a very positive, upbeat character."

At the same time, he notes, Cap does not profess a "love it or leave it" attitude toward America, as some fans seem to think he does. "Captain America supports the ideals that America was founded on, but he's not blind to stupid things we do. His inspiration comes from 1776, when some patriots decided to buck the rules and create a new nation with liberty and justice for all. He follows the goals and ideals. If the rules get in the way, sometimes he might have to break them."

The character also hasn't become disenchanted by years of government scandals and broken promises, he adds. "I don't think he's easy to disillusion. That's been done to some extent with him, and I'd rather go another way. I think one of his great strengths is that he can't be shaken from his ideals. Cap sees things in black and white. He's capable of understanding grays and forgiving other people's grays, but his own outlook on the world is very black and white."

For that reason, Waid doesn't expect to get into Cap's head too much. "We know what Captain America thinks," he argues. "There's no mystery there. I'm more interested in how he acts. I think he should be less loquacious than he's been and less given to speeches. He should be the cavalry coming to the rescue."

His model for that aspect comes from another medium: the 1940s Fleischer Superman cartoons. "You don't get into Superman's head, he just does his stuff. Things blow up for a while, and then Superman rushes in." Actually, he notes, Superman usually rushed in a tad late in those cartoons. "I usually watch those and say, 'It was a job for Superman two minutes ago, Clark,'" he laughs. "'You might have wanted to get here before the giant Japanese planes started dropping out of the sky!' I'm not saying that [the cavalry] approach is going to happen all the time in *Captain*

Ron Garney will be penciling *Captain America*.

"What makes kids look at Captain America as an old fogey is that he looks and acts and talks like your dad. No kid thinks his dad is cool."
—Mark Waid

America, but it's another influence I have."

Still another inspiration comes from even further afield. Jack Ryan, the star of Tom Clancy's spy novels. "I'm going to play up the secret agent aspect of the character," he reveals. "It's not going to be done to the point of being deadly dull, because you need people in costumes banging around. But I do think it will be fun to mix things up with S.H.I.E.L.D. and intermingle the post-Cold War thriller stuff that Tom Clancy and [spy novelist] John LeCarré are so good at."

Ryan's ability to adapt to circumstances matches Cap's own abilities, he adds. "Nothing surprises Captain America—nothing. After all, he's seen the president blow his own head off [in the unforgettable issue #175]. That makes Cap a great strategic fighter, because he's always one step ahead of the game. His great strength is that he's the most adaptable human being around. He has a very clear idea of his place in the world, and he hits the ground running no matter what. He's the first one to get going no matter what the context or situation."

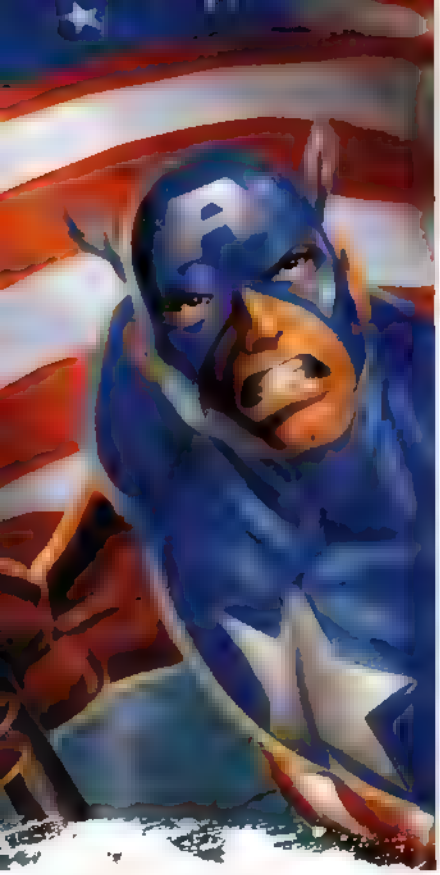
What's not so clear, however, is who's behind the Captain America mask these days. Following the events of the 13-part "Fighting Chance" story arc that brought him perilously close to death, Steve Rogers is rethinking his life and goals. In explaining his own goals with the Cap cast, Waid often hedges his words, not wishing to step on the final plotlines developed by his predecessor on the book, longtime Cap writer Mark Gruenwald.

"Steve Rogers's position and his outlook are the linchpins for Mark's final plots," Waid explains. Because of that, Waid's first issue won't even feature Captain America. "We'll be spinning off Mark's last issues, so my first [#443] deals with the Avengers and Cap's supporting cast as they cope with the perception that Cap is not around any more. It focuses on what has happened to Captain America and leads into my first story arc."

While the identity of the man behind the mask remains unclear, Steve Rogers will remain a part of the book. Unfortunately, without his mask, Rogers has little identity of his own. "The problem with giving Steve Rogers another job always has been that it's small compared to being Captain America. None of it rang completely true," Waid says. "Steve Rogers existed to put on the mask. He got up in the morning and said, 'Let's go spread some liberty today.'"

How Rogers's role will be affected if he does indeed transfer the Captain America persona is one of many threads being explored by Gruenwald in his final story arc before giving up the book. Recently promoted to editor-in-chief of the Marvel Classic line, which includes *Captain America*, Gruenwald has been chronicling Cap's adventures for 10 years, which makes for a remarkable run on one title. While picking up the reins from a writer who has handled the book for so long may seem a little daunting, it does have its advantages, Waid notes.

"It's easier to get a handle on the character because Mark [Gruenwald] has a clear idea of where he's been for 10 years," he says. "One of the problems in taking over any character who's been around this long is that [in many other cases] six times in the last 15



years, they've done something horribly radical with the character to juice him up. It makes it harder to come up with anything radical to do yourself, and it makes it hard to justify some of the previous stupid decisions. That's not the case with Captain America."

So is it possible to do something new with the shield-slinger? "I was afraid that he'd already done everything," Waid admits. "Then I had a galvanizing moment when I thought of an idea, a gift from the Muses, that had never been done. I pitched it, and everyone liked it and agreed it had never been done. So that makes me hopeful that there are places to go."

And just where is Cap going? Waid, a master tormentor, let only a few clues slip. The first: The Red Skull returns in issue #444. The second: "I'll be picking up threads from *Super-Villain Team-Up* [Marvel's short-lived '70s series], of all things, and I hope to be able to put those together into a tapestry that people will want to pay attention to."

And, oh yes, just one more tidbit: "That issue [#444], and I say this without fear of contradiction, will unequivocally have the biggest threat that Captain America has ever faced, one that strikes right to the core of the character."

Some of these elements will help the creative team build to issue #450, for which no specific plans have been set yet. But Waid has one surprise he's ready to spring already. "We're going to be bringing back a major character you haven't seen for about 15 years," he reveals. "This character will serve as the fulcrum around which things revolve and will be the engine that drives the book for the first year."

Hmmm. An old-time major character? Could it be Sharon Carter, Cap's love interest from the Silver Age? Nah, it couldn't be, because she's dead. Isn't she? Waid quickly clams up about Sharon, but isn't able to stifle one observation. "Sharon Carter had the worst on-camera death in comics," he states. "It was also the least-convincing death ever. Besides, it may not make much difference how she died. That's all I'm going to say." (For the record, Cap saw a videotape of Sharon bursting into flames while on a S.H.I.E.L.D. mission in issue #237.)

Waid also harbors strong opinions about that other old-time major character, Bucky. "As far as I'm concerned, Bucky is sleeping with the fishes," he says flatly. "To bring back Bucky would be an incredible cheat. There's nothing you could possibly do in reviving him that wouldn't disappoint someone."

As to the rest of Cap's multitude of supporting characters—Diamondback, Americop, U.S.Agent, D-Man, Falcon, Free Spirit, etc., etc., etc.—Waid is just as emphatic. "My approach is the same as I took with *Flash*: Burn 'em to the ground," he laughs. "There's no place for them in the first arc, and beyond that I can't say."

Waid believes Cap suffers the same problem that the Flash did when he took over that book. "Captain America, at least partially, is in danger of being overrun by his supporting cast," he says. "It's almost a team book. I want to pare down the characters and focus on Cap. What needs juicing up in the book is Cap himself."

To accomplish that takes only a major injection of what makes Captain America stand out from the crowd, he asserts. "The best thing about Cap is that he has a pretty angstless existence. He did have some angst [back in the Stan Lee/Gene Colan days], but he put it behind him. Today, he's bright and shiny and positive—relentlessly positive—and that's what I key into."

Readers are keying into that attitude as well, judging by the rising sales of Waid's work on *Flash*, *Legion of Super-Heroes*, and *Legionnaires*, all at DC. "The success of those books gives me hope that there's a growing market for bright, shiny stuff instead of the relentless gloom and doom," he says. "For the first time in my life, I may be at the forefront of a trend. I don't think the sales are going up because of me, but because we're doing something out of the ordinary—we're not doing grim 'n' gritty. So I'm as excited about this as I've been about anything I've done." ★

Craig Shutt is a freelance writer based in Chicago, Ill.

Feather in His Cap

Teaming with Mark Waid on *Captain America* will be artist Ron Garney and inker Mike Sellers. With a resumé that includes *Dark Design* (the recent GhostRider/Wolverine/Punisher trade paperback) and issues of *Ghost Rider* and *Moon Knight*, Garney has the perfect background for bringing Cap into the '90s. Have no fear though, the shield-slinger won't be scowling or wearing a costume full of useless pouches and enormous shiny spikes anytime soon.

"I'm not a big fan of changing costumes," he says. "I did it with Moon Knight to some extent, but that was just to jazz him up without taking too much away from the original. I think there's something to be said for being able to develop an iconic character without breaking away from what people are familiar with. If you can't do it with stories and personality, the visual isn't going to do it. For instance, I think it was a mistake to change Daredevil's costume. They screwed up a good thing."

Garney leaped at the chance to pencil *Captain America* and leave his dark days behind him, he adds. "I wanted to get out of the whole dark end of the Ghost Rider universe. When I started out, I was doing all dark, moody characters, like Moon Knight and Night Stalker. That's really not what I got into the comics business to do."

In fact, he even used Captain America samples to snare his first work from Marvel, he adds. "It's going to be a real kick for me to do Cap. It's hard for me to say I'm going to put the definitive spin on his visuals, but I'm going to be drawing the best I can."

The element that attracts Garney to the character is Cap's "unwavering belief in his value system," he says. "A lot of super-heroes today have this 'humanized element.' Batman is a brooding, bitter character, for instance. Captain America may be the most politically incorrect character out there, but he still stands on his own. He stands out from the crowd because he goes against the grain."

Garney's artistic influences are wide, but his key inspirations for Captain America come from Jack Kirby and Mike Zeck. "I hope I can bring a new life to the character and really try to create a three-dimensional feeling, one that's less cartoony looking than what's been on the book for a while."

His first challenge, which he's looking forward to, will be depicting the Red Skull. "That's going to be fun. The Red Skull can be a really interesting character if he's done right visually." The team's initial storyline sets up the Skull with more contemporary motivation than old World War II grudges, he adds. "We want to tie up some of the loose ends with him and stay away from the 1940s angle," he explains. "I think we agree that it's time to move on beyond that."

Garney vows to remain on the book for at least two years, and he stresses that he'll be there every month. "I've never missed a deadline that made a book ship late," he states. "We're also getting a good jump on the book, so there should be a cushion going into it. Fans aren't going to have to worry about getting fill-in artists, because I'm not going to let that happen."

And each month is going to be better than the last. "I'm going to have a ball with the character," he vows. "And as for how it comes out visually, just wait and see."

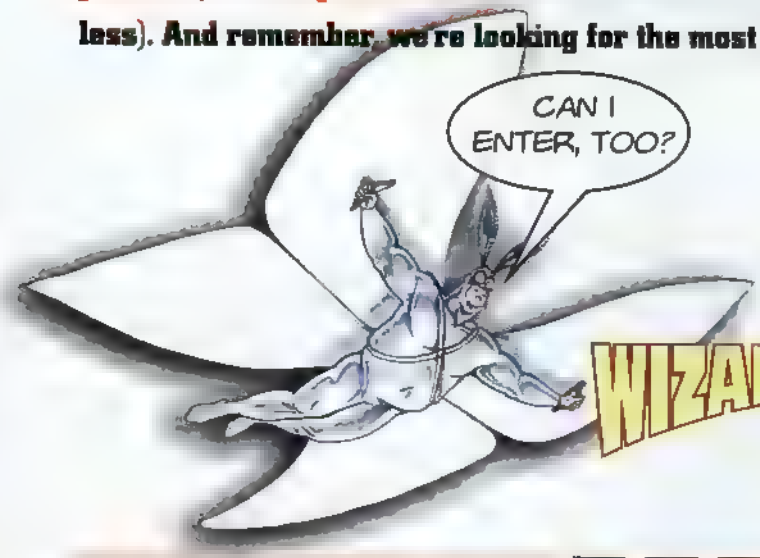
TICKED OFF!

Every young boy wants to dress in spandex and hang around grown men who do the same, and by golly, that's what this contest is all about! But first, here's what you can win:

Grand Prize (One winner)

The winner will lay his or her hands on one of every single Tick toy out there (all from Bandai America), including: 11 three-inch action figures (Tick, Arthur, American Maid, The Human Bullet, Sewer Urchin, Chairface Chippendale, Dinosaur Neil, The Crusading Chameleon, El Seed, Dean, and Dyna-Mole); 10 six-inch figures (Bounding Tick, Fluttering Arthur, Cape-Furling Die Fledermaus, Sewer Spray Sewer Urchin, Projectile Human Bullet, Man-Eating Cow, Death Hug Dean, Exploding Dyna-Mole, Grasping El Seed, and Dinosaur Neil); [illegible] Sabaugine Sewer Urchin, and Gang Dustin' El Seed) and the 16-inch talking Tick figure. Whoa, Nellie!

Pretty happenin' stuff, huh? Anyway, here's the story: The Tick is ticked off at his hopeless sidekick Arthur, and is frantically looking for a replacement. What you've gotta do is create a brand-new sidekick for the Tick, using anything you have around the house. It can be parts of other toys, Play-Doh, deviled ham—heck, whatever floats your boat. But the fun doesn't stop there, though. After you're done makin' the bugger, we want a bio sheet that includes: Superhero name, secret identity, age, height, weight, powers (this six-part section should total 50 words or less), and origin (50 words or less). And remember, we're looking for the most original creation, so don't hold back!



After you wrap all that up, take a photo of your creation (No Polaroids, and focus! Repeat: No Polaroids, and focus!), then send that, along with your character bio and the Tick entry coupon below, to:

WIZARD®

Tick Sidekick Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

This contest expires June 30, 1995, so get a-movin'!

LEGAL NONSENSE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and anybody who hasn't seen the Tick cartoon. Man, that thing is one of the best things on TV. Go set your VCR. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card. Enclose the form or card with your character bio and photo. Mail each entry to Tick Sidekick Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules herein. William Shatner is fat. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected by the Wizard staffers, who will look for the entry with the most originality, creativity, and quality. The judging will be conducted on July 3, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name, available after July 16, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Tick Sidekick Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching Wizard!

The Tick ™ & © Ben Edlund

Tick Sidekick Contest

ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 30, 1995!

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

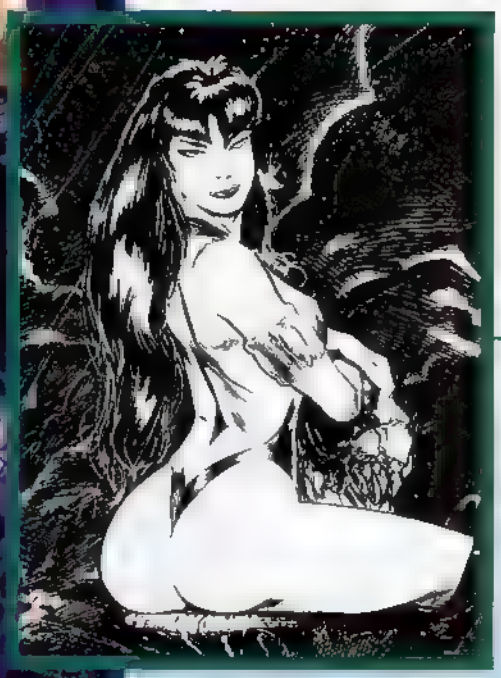
CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE ( ) DATE OF BIRTH

the Drawing board

The showcase of comic book fan art.

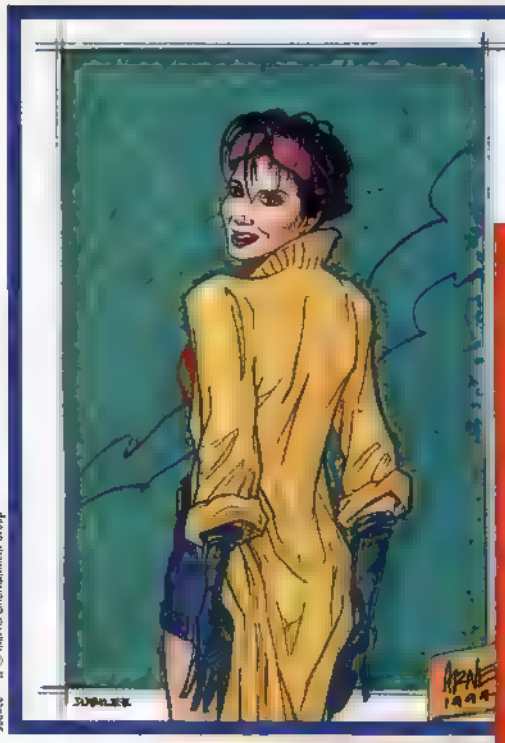
The 10 people whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive an *Aquaman* #0 signed by Peter David, a *WildStar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway, and a *Badrock and Company* #1 signed by Todd Nauck. The four runners-up will each receive a *Violator* #1 signed by Bart Sears, a *Supreme* #12 signed by Stephen Platt, and an *Evil Ernie: Revenge* #1 glow-in-the-dark edition signed by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, and Jason Jensen. The artist of the winning entry this month will receive a *Superman/Doomsday* #1 signed by Dan Jurgens, a *Prophet* #5 signed by Stephen Platt, a Lady Death hardcover edition signed by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, and Jason Jensen, and [illegible] by Caesar (thanks, guy)! Congrats to all!



GRAND PRIZE

MAGNETO
By Zachary Maclean
New York, NY

Magneto ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Vampirella ™ & © Harris Publications Inc.



RUNNER-UP

JUBILEE
By Arne Ratermanis
San Diego, CA

Jubilee ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

RUNNER-UP

CERBUS
By BJC
Carlisle, PA

Cerebus ™ & © Dave Sim

RUNNER-UP

JUDGE DREDD
By Mark Stope
Victoria, B.C., Canada

Judge Dredd ™ & © Egmont Foundation

RUNNER-UP

MORBIUS & GRENDEL
By Richard A. Van Dongen Jr.
Newark, NY

Morbius ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Grendel ™ & © Matt Wagner

BLOODWULF
By PIN & Alex Ogle
Iola, KS

Bloodwulf™ & © Rod Lofield Inc.

GAREB MEETS STEVEN TYLER
By Edgar Tadeo
Binangonan, Rizal, Philippines

Spawn™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions Inc. Gareb and Steven ™ & © their respective parents.

Lady Killer™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.

LADY KILLER
By Morten Thorberg Hansen
Denmark

LADY BONE
By Tracie Ann Ferrazzano
Lodi, NJ

Lady Death™ & © Brian Pulido. Bone™ & © Jeff Smith.

DEATH
By Hafiz Aziz Ahmad
Jawa Barat, Indonesia

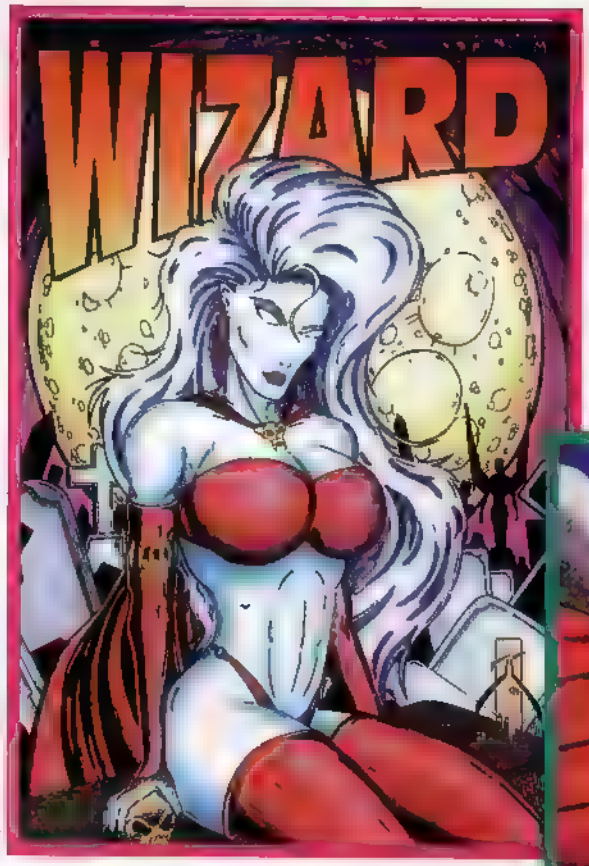
Death™ & © DC Comics

SPIDER-MAN
By Dan Tran
Lowrence, MA

Spider-Man™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Youngblood™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.

YOUNGBLOOD
By Romel M. Pura
Philippines



Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido

LADY DEATH
By James Cave
Bowie, MD

SPAWN & VIOLATOR
By Reynaldo Acevedo
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Spawn & Violator ™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions Inc

Dawn ™ & © Joseph Michael Linsner

DAWN
By Steven W. Paluch
St. Louis, MO

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:
The Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.) Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

CUT & PRINT

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

by MaRC ShaPiRo

Ghost Rider may be setting movie screens a blaze sometime down the road.

Ghost Rider iN thE Sky?

Marvel Comics's spectre book *Ghost Rider* is making motion picture noise at Savoy Pictures, on the strength of a script by David Goyer. The folks over at Savoy are not saying anything beyond the fact that *Ghost Rider* is "not close to a production start date, or a release [date]." Ghost Rider came close to screen time in the mid-1980s under the guidance of producer Dino DeLaurentis, but ran into script and money problems.

Another Marvel warrior long in development hell at New Line Cinema is Blade, and the temperature is suddenly rising. An early version of a *Blade* movie, scripted by Lee Goldberg and William Robkin, went unfilmed during the '80s. But a Goyer script is once again striking sparks and has attracted the interest of director Ernest Dickerson and the rumored interest of action star Wesley Snipes (*Passenger 57*, *Drop Zone*).

tim burton attacks?

Big-budget film versions of Topps classic card collections, Mars Attacks! and Dinosaurs Attack!, are in our collective future with the announcement that *Batman* director Tim Burton has purchased the film rights from Topps. The talk is that *Mars Attacks!* might even be Burton's next project, temporarily backburning his long-rumored *Catwoman* film. Warner Bros., where Burton presently hangs his hat, is mum on both the Mars and Catwoman projects. However, it is known that a script of *Mars Attacks!*, written by Jonathan Gems, is currently being worked on.

Marty Appel, a spokesman for Topps, reports that "all the contracts have not been signed yet, and so Warner Bros. has requested that we don't comment. But if it happens, we will be thrilled."

ultraCool!

It looks like Malibu Comics's *UltraForce* will be the newest kids on the animation block. An animated series, tentatively slated for a fall of '95 release, will feature all of the regular UltraForce characters, including Prime, Ghoul, Prototype, and Contrary.

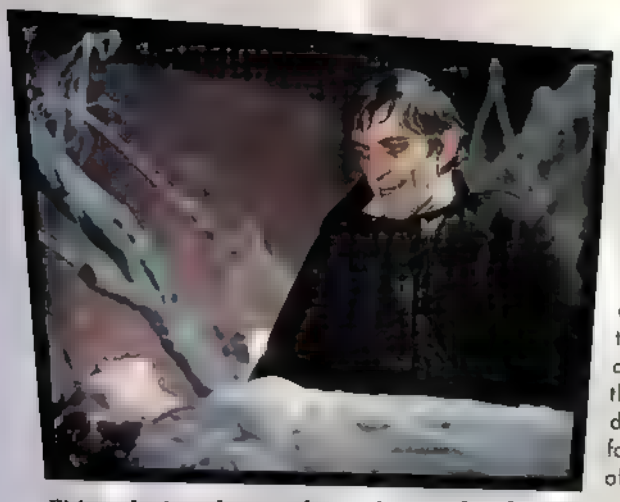
"We'll be adding a couple of new characters as the season progresses," stated Malibu Comics editor Hank Kanalz, "and guest stars [like] the Night Man, Sludge, Rune, and Lord Pumpkin."

Kanalz added that some of the new characters created for the animated series will eventually find their way into the *UltraForce* comic book itself. "We also have a toy line, from Galoob, and the toys and accessories that we have planned for the toy line will also be incorporated into the cartoon show and vice versa. And both of them will affect *UltraForce*, the actual [comic] series, as well. It's a very well-coordinated effort on all our parts."

The series is currently pending with D.I.C. Entertainment, and a full six scripts have already been written. The first three episodes will be loosely based on *UltraForce* #1-#6, in which UltraForce takes on that baddest of dudes, Avalon.

—Andrew Kardon

Ghost Rider ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group



"My, what a nice neck you have...by the way, did you know that there was a missing *Dark Shadows* episode?"

ACE GOES TO AFRICA

Jim Carrey is taking *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* on the road in the sequel to the hit film, which began filming in late March. *Ace Ventura Goes to Africa* once again stars everybody's favorite rubber face in this tale of Ace looking for a lost pet in the jungle. Directing is Tom DeCerchio from a Steve Odekirk script. There's no confirmation on the rumor that Jerry Lewis will appear as Ace's father. Carrey's long-anticipated follow-up to *The Mask* is also rumored to be a road picture of sorts, with Dark Horse's well-known antihero hitting the beaches of Hawaii.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS EPISODE?

Sometime during the fifth and final season of the 1960s gothic soap *Dark Shadows*, an episode was filmed in which the characters of Bramwell (Jonathan Frid) and Daphne (Kate Jackson) were married. Well, guess what, folks? That episode has quite literally disappeared off the face of the Earth, and a major league hunt is on for anybody who has that episode in any way, shape, or form.

The Sci-Fi Channel, which currently owns the exclusive rights to air *Dark Shadows*, has assigned Manager of Programming Lou Fazio to track down the missing episode, but so far the episode remains a no-show.

"We've searched high and low for the show," Fazio told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "We even put out an all-points bulletin on the major computer online services in an attempt to find someone who might even have a homemade VHS tape of the wayward episode."

Steve Pierson, a spokesman for Dan Curtis Productions, the creator-owner of *Dark Shadows*, claims the more than 1,200 episodes of the show were released into syndication gradually over the years, but it was only last year, when the company was doing the mastering for the video release of *Dark Shadows* episodes, that it discovered the missing fifth season episode.

"When we opened the box containing the fifth season episodes, we found the film container marked with the episode, [but] it contained a blank reel," reports Pierson. "Our feeling is that sometime after that episode originally aired, the wrong reel was put back in the box. Another theory is that the containers were moved several times over the years, and that it's possible that the reel fell out in transit."

Unfortunately, claims Pierson, the Kinescope process that would have allowed for some pre-prints ended approximately four months before the episode in question was filmed. "We've had cases where other episodes were missing, but we were able to use black-and-white Kinescope replacement prints. Unfortunately, home video was not a common option back in '71," says Pierson.

For video purposes, the production company found an audio tape of that episode recorded by a fan in Canada, added stills of the characters and managed to get former *Dark Shadows* actress Laura Parker to do a narration and voiceover of the episode.

As for the odds of finding an actual tape of the missing episode, Pierson says, "I really think it's going to be next to impossible."

(Anyone with a copy of the episode or information on where a copy might be found is invited to contact Dan Curtis Productions at 310-575-8999.)

CBS LOOKS TO TOMORROW

The CBS television network and 20th Century Fox have signed on the bottom line for a two-hour television movie called *Tomorrow Man*, which will serve as a backdoor pilot for a weekly series. The concept, created by Alan Spencer, who came to fame as the brains behind the very funny and short-lived *Sledgehammer* series, tells the tale of Earth in the far-flung future, where humanity has been wiped out through a mysterious disaster. The sole survivors, a group of androids, travel back in time to determine what wiped out the human

An *All Dogs Go to Heaven* SEQUEL?!! Who's the jackass who thought this one up? They're all dead!! DEAD!!

DARK SHADOWS photo courtesy of Everett Collection. ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN™ & © United Artists Pictures Inc.

race and to prevent the disaster from happening.

animation notes of note

The first Mickey Mouse animated short in more than 35 years, entitled *Runaway Brain*, is being completed by a Disney animation unit in Paris and is scheduled for a summer release. The short, which began production in April 1994, is directed by Chris Bailey. The storyline for *Runaway Brain* has Mickey falling into the clutches of a mad scientist who puts Mickey's brain inside of a monster he has built... *All Dogs Go to Heaven 2*, a sequel to the original 1989 animated film, has grown from a projected, low-budget, direct-to-video feature, to a $20 million theatrical film slated for a 1996 release. Directing is Larry Leker. Voiceover stars include Charlie Sheen, Dom DeLuise, and Ernest Borgnine...There's new life for *The Critic*, as new episodes of the critically acclaimed but basically misunderstood CBS animated series have found a home on the FOX Network. Word from the show's creators is that the new shows will continue to have the initial incarnation's cutting edge, but that the title character won't be as mean-spirited.

spidey scores a knockout

Marvel's newest animated series, *Spider-Man*, had a dazzling network debut as the highest-rated show on Saturday morning, delivering the FOX Children's Network's highest ratings for the 1994-95 season in that time slot. One hour later, *X-Men* duplicated Spidey's efforts by winning its time slot in the 2-11 age group.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to see two Marvel properties neck-and-neck for first place in the Nielsens," said Marvel Comics's Stan Lee, who created both characters and serves as co-executive producer for each series. "I guess you could call this sibling rivalry in the very best sense, and I certainly intend to do everything I can to keep it going."

Ol' Spidey here seems to be pumped up 'cause his Saturday cartoon series scored the highest ratings for FOX.

inquiring trekkers want to know

At last! The truth behind the quick departure of Genevieve Bujold from the *Star Trek: Voyager* universe. After shooting for approximately two days on the *Voyager* pilot, during which time the actress voiced repeated complaints about the presence of continuity photographers and makeup people, she reportedly confessed to the pilot's director Rick Kolbe that she did not feel she was right for the part. Later that second day, the conversation continued in Bujold's trailer, where the director was finally convinced that the actress was serious. Kolbe called in the show's producers, who, after talking to Bujold, agreed that the actress was not up to handling the role of Captain Kathryn Janeway (which later went to Kate Mulgrew). Bujold's spokespeople were unavailable for comment. Word from Voyager collectible central is that some footage of Bujold as Janeway does exist, has been locked away, and will most certainly surface at some point; the better to make its owner some major money.

Will "King of All Media" Howard Stern die a violent, bloody death?

three for saturday

Three new youth-oriented TV series will be added to the FOX Saturday morning lineup during the 1995-96 season. First out of the box is *Masked Rider*, a live-action series from Saban Entertainment, producers of *The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*. From the animation pool comes *Life with Louie*, a program based on the childhood memories of comedian Louie Anderson. Also in the works is an animated series, *Casper*, which will be based on Steven Spielberg's live-action film slated for a summer release.

howard stern dies (almost)

A lot of people would like nothing better than to see controversial radio personality (and apparent comic book fan) Howard Stern die a violent, bloody death. Well, it came very close to happening in the upcoming horror sequel *Halloween 6*. According to *Halloween 6* screenwriter Daniel Farrands, "Howard was approached to play the part of a Stern type who is killed by [*Halloween*'s serial killer] Michael Myers in the film. Unfortunately, he was too busy doing his own film to find the time to do it. But he did say that he really liked the idea of being killed by Michael Myers." Well, there's always *Halloween 7*... ☆

Marc Shapiro is a freelance writer based in Pasadena, Calif.

Howard Stern photo courtesy of Everett Collection. Spider-Man™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

FROM THE HIP

by Paul J. Grant

The Jim Shooter Interview

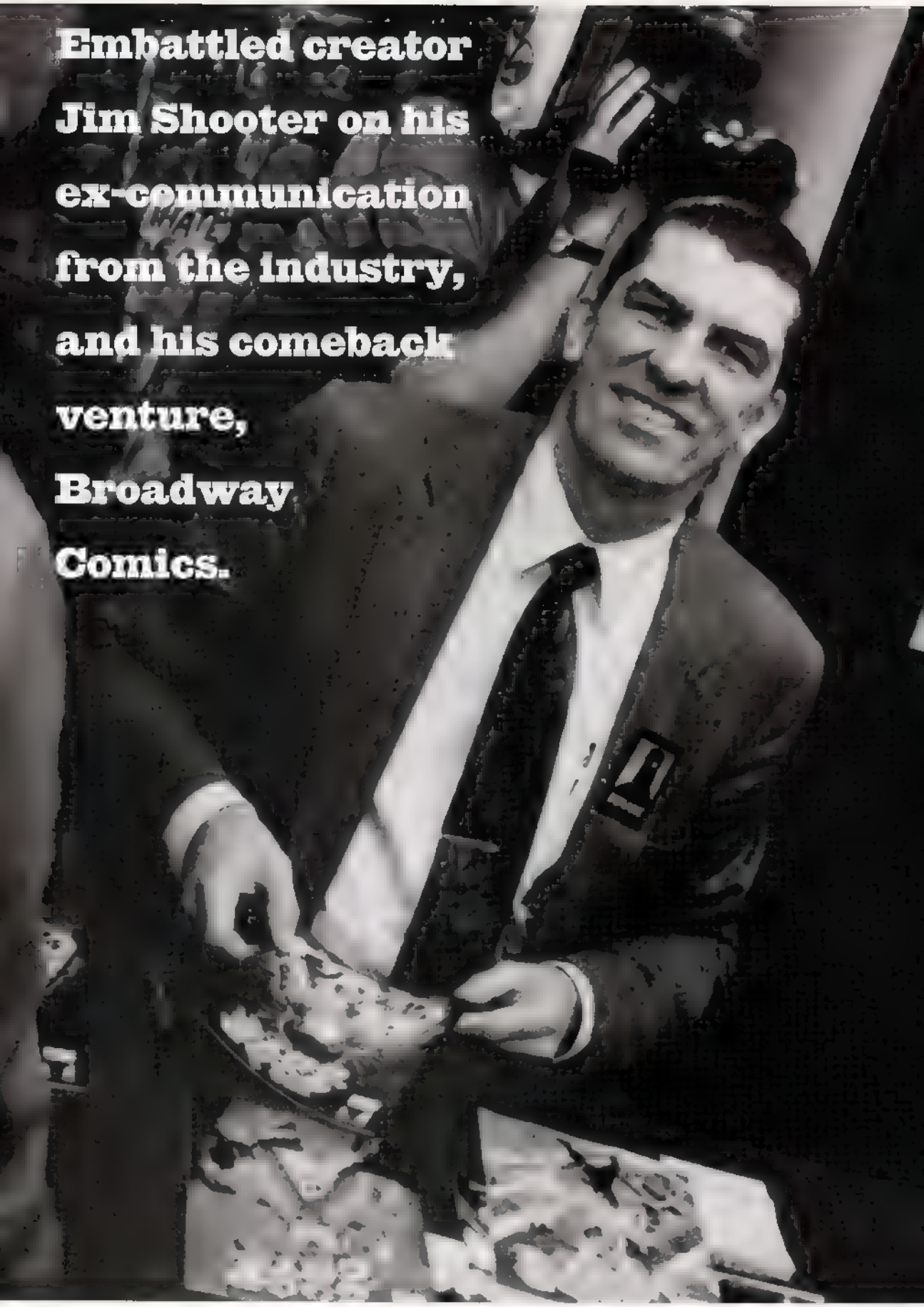
There's something catlike about Jim Shooter. Perhaps it's the number of lives. Maybe it's the way he has of always landing on his feet. Born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1951, Shooter broke into the comic industry at the impossibly young age of 13, and over the last 30 years, he's made his mark time and time again—whether it was as a writer at DC Comics, or editor-in-chief at Marvel Comics, Valiant, and Defiant—gathering friends and enemies along the way. This interview, conducted in December 1994, followed the announcement of the latest chapter of Shooter's life, Broadway Comics. While he couldn't announce much of Broadway's content, he had plenty of other things to say.

WIZARD You are, in some ways, the ultimate fanboy success story, because there are thousands of youngsters out there right now who want to be what you managed to become in the 1960s. How did all that come about?

JIM SHOOTER: I used to read Uncle Scrooge and Superman, but I had gotten kind of tired of them when I was about eight. I was in the hospital [for minor surgery] when I was 12. I was in a kids' ward, so there were lots of comics around, and I picked up some of the ones I was familiar with, like Superman, and nothing had changed. They were the same stories—Lois Lane trying to find out Superman's secret identity—and they were pretty tedious. But there were also these ratty books that looked like they had been read to death. They were these newfangled Marvel comics, and they were pretty good. A little light bulb went on in my head: if I could learn to write like these guys, I could sell stories to DC, because I thought they needed help.

I was canny enough not to think I knew it all on the first try. I spent about a year studying Marvel's comics, trying to figure out what I liked about them. When I thought I had an idea of what made a good story, I sat down and wrote one for Legion of Super-Heroes [in *Adventure Comics*], which I thought was one of their weaker titles. It seemed to me like it had a great deal of promise, yet it missed all the bets. Since I didn't know what a script looked like, I did little layouts with stick figures to go with it, and drew a cover and colored it with my colored pencils and sent it off to [DC's office in] New York. I got an encouraging letter back from Mort Weisinger, who was the editor, which said, "Send us another one."

So I sent him two more, a two-part story. Then I got a phone call from Mort Weisinger. He said, "We want to buy these, and we want you to do another one." So I started working my way through high school doing comics, and making money



Embattled creator Jim Shooter on his ex-communication from the industry, and his comeback venture, Broadway Comics.

to support my family

What was the first story you wrote for the Legion of Super-Heroes?

The first one I wrote was maybe the third or fourth one they published. It was the origin of Sun Boy. The first one they published was the first appearance of Karate Kid, *Adventure Comics* #346-#347.

Did Weisinger know how young you were?

Later, he found out. By then, I'd turned 14 and had sold my first one when I was 13. I lived in Pittsburgh and was working through the mail 400 miles away. The funny thing was I had to bring my mother with me on my first business trip, which was kind of embarrassing.

What did you do after graduating from high school?

After high school, I worked briefly at Marvel Comics for a couple of weeks. I had a great time there, but I clearly couldn't afford to live in New York. You had to live in New York in those days to work for Marvel, and moving up here when you're 18 and don't have any money or a place to stay and you don't know anybody ..I just ran out of money and had to go home. I went back to Pittsburgh.

And what kept you occupied then?

For a while, I did commercial comics. I was kind of well-known in Pittsburgh as The Kid Who Did Comics, so I got calls from advertising agencies, from people who wanted comic-style ads for U.S. Steel and local supermarket chains, and all kinds of things.

But you soon felt comics' siren call again.

I got a phone call from Marvel, inviting me to come up and talk to them. So I went up and talked to both Marvel and DC, in 1973 or 1974, and they were all happy to give me work. In those days, you picked one or the other—you didn't do both—so I wound up at DC.

How come you didn't use an alias and do both?

I guess I wasn't smart enough to think of that. I worked for DC for a couple of years, writing *Superman* and *World's Finest*. Towards the end of that, I did do some freelance work for Marvel, because I was getting ready to leave DC. I got a call from [Marvel editor-in-chief] Marv Wolfman, offering me a job as an editor at Marvel. I took that, and started there at the beginning of 1976, and worked as an editor for two years, and then became editor-in-chief at the beginning of '78. I was editor-in-chief until 1987.

Who did you replace as editor-in-chief?

It was Archie Goodwin. There was Marv, and then Gerry Conway for about three weeks, then Archie for about 19 months, and then there was me. I was the seventh editor of Marvel, and was there for almost 10 years. They'd gone through editors-in-chief like most people change their socks, so when they offered me the job, I was sort of the last guy left. I think that in the couple years before, as an editor, I had impressed Stan Lee [Marvel's publisher and first editor-in-chief]

> "I was the seventh editor of Marvel... They'd gone through editors-in-chief like most people change their socks, so when they offered me the job, I was sort of the last guy left."

When you became editor-in-chief at Marvel, what did you see as your mandate, as your responsibility for the general direction of the company?

I took the job on the condition that we could change the way we did business. I talked with Jim Galton, who was the new publisher, and I said, "I'd like to start paying royalties." And he said, "We don't?" His view was that comics were dying, and Marvel should get into children's books, animation, and ultimately film. What he wanted me to do was to try to lose as little money as possible—Marvel was losing $2.5 million a year—and keep the company going until we could successfully shift into these other businesses. I thought that comics could be very successful, so he basically said I could do anything, as long as it didn't cost a lot of money. I had *carte blanche*, except that I had to show a profit quickly on anything I did. We doubled the page rates, and doubled them again. We standardized the insurance policy, and offered it to freelancers. It was a monumental task, because comics were still in the Dark Ages, and every time I did one of these things, I had to do a business plan that showed the company that there'd be some financial benefit to it which would be realized fairly quickly.

But didn't DC come out with a royalty plan before Marvel?

DC had a four-percent-of-cover-price royalty, which was easy for them, because their royalty threshold was 100,000 copies, and they only had three books that sold over 100,000. What they were hoping for was to get Marvel creators to desert *en masse*. Every single Marvel title sold over 100,000, and so it would have cost us $750,000 off the bottom line. Now try selling that plan to the management. But I did. And guess what? It cost us almost $2,000,000, because our sales went up so much. [Inker] Vince Colletta once showed me three DC royalty checks that did not total a dollar, [while] most Marvel books were paying hundreds, even thousands of dollars.

What was your editorial policy at that point? How did you change the way Marvel told stories?

My editorial philosophy is pretty wide-ranging. I think that will surprise a lot of people. People have this image of me as a stodgy guy, but they forget I'm the guy who hired [artist] Bill Sienkiewicz and turned him loose on *New Mutants* [in 1984] and said, "Here, Bill. Reinvent comics." I figured if Marvel couldn't roll the dice, who could? I liked expanding the envelope. On the other hand, I always feel that people should learn their craft first. What I saw at Marvel when I came in there was an awful lot of talented people who hadn't gone to boot camp like I did, and learned the fundamentals.

What are the fundamentals?

First of all, storytelling. We had people who could draw brilliantly, but couldn't use the picture to communicate. They had no narrative sense. When John Byrne started out, he drew wonderfully, but look at his early stuff. Try to just look at the pictures and figure out what's going on. Same with Frank Miller when he started out. At some point a light bulb went off, and he started doing that brilliant stuff on

Daredevil. To writers, the first thing I explained was you ought to mention the character's name somewhere in the story. Give people a clue. Once they got over that hurdle, I started talking about having a complete event take place in the story. Let's have something start and something finish. Think about introducing characters. Think about what is at stake here. I talked to colorists and inkers about creating depth. Fundamental cartoon stuff that I learned from Mort Weisinger and Stan Lee and Steve Ditko and Curt Swan. I wasn't inventing any of this stuff. I was just passing it down.

You had a few well-publicized clashes with creators at Marvel.

If somebody was doing Spider-Man, which had cartoons and merchandise, somebody who signed a license was, of course, counting on us not to do anything obscene in a Spider-Man comic. You can't do the story where Spider-Man fathers an illegitimate child. Do the story in another comic book that we don't have a vast merchandising empire dependent upon. Sometimes those guys got all upset, and they [gave interviews saying] what a jerk you are because you won't give them their creative freedom. If you're hired to be the defender of Marvel's properties, you probably ought not to let the guy do that story, and if it impinges on his creative freedom, I'm sorry.

What led up to your departure from Marvel?

In the last three or four years I was at Marvel, Marvel was going through a period where first there was a hostile takeover attempt. Cadence, who owned Marvel at the time, paid millions to make it go away. Their shortsighted thinking put me in a position of becoming almost a labor leader [laughs], because me and all of my friends intended to have our careers there and they were kind of selling us up the river. I was in daily fights with the management; they wanted to cancel the royalty plan—retroactively, no less. They did, in fact, cash out the pension plan. It got ugly. The last thing anyone wanted to hear about was improving things for the artists.

I was very naive. I'd been promised a bunch of things by the management, because if I had left when they were trying to sell the company, it might have hurt their ability to sell it. When the sale was completed, I went to the president of the [new] company and said, "I want to pay these people we owe money to. I want all these inequities settled." He said no. They did their best to undercut my power base, ruin my reputation, blame everything they could blame on me, support anybody who had a bad thing to say about me, and not support anybody who was sort of on my side. So, by the time I left Marvel in 1987, I was basically responsible for everything, you know. [The controversy of Marvel's not returning] Jack Kirby's artwork? Must be Jim's

MANY OF MARVEL'S GREATEST STORYLINES TOOK PLACE WHILE JIM SHOOTER WAS AT THE HELM.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, DAREDEVIL, UNCANNY X-MEN and all related characters and likenesses ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

THESE ARE SOME OF THE TITLES SHOOTER HELPED TO LAUNCH AT VALIANT.

fault. [laughs] Anything that ever went wrong must be my fault.

Well, you were the public face of Marvel Comics.

Yeah! Nobody knows the names Jim Galton and [Cadence chairman of the board] Sheldon Feinberg, but those were the guys giving the lawyers their instructions with regard to Kirby, not me. But to this day, it's like "Jim Shooter wouldn't give Jack Kirby his artwork back." Well, excuse me.

What, if anything, do you most regret about your tenure at Marvel?

In my tenure at Marvel, I never did anything out of spite, malice, greed, or self-interest. There were times when it would have been grimly satisfying to fire somebody or to do something to someone who richly deserved it. I didn't. I can honestly say that whatever I did, I did because it was my job. I thought I was doing the right and honorable thing. I regret nothing.

You largely disappeared from the comics scene after that.

After I left Marvel, I wrote children's books and a live action show, and worked for Disney for a year as a consultant. I thought that was it for comics because, man, I was the industry pariah. My phone never rang. I never got a single offer. Am I such a bad writer? Am I the worst guy, that no one would call me? The public story was that I was some kind of monster, and the industry turned its back on me big time.

Well, let's address the "Jim Shooter Ogre" theory. People have accused you of having selective memory, to be kind, or being an out-and-out liar regarding your accomplishments and your advocacy of creative rights. How do you react to these accusations?

If anybody ever presented it point-by-point, every single thing I've said, I've been absolutely honest. I did what I said I did. The people who claim that I didn't usually weren't there, and don't have a clue. If there were real journalists in comics, they'd check those people out and examine their motives. They'd say, "Does this guy have any axes to grind? Does he have an agenda here?" Look at John Byrne. He wrote a nasty letter in one of these magazines. Go back and read the interviews that John Byrne did in the early '80s, when he was talking about how he would follow me through the gates of Hell, and how much better off he was because we had introduced all these programs. I don't actually know what I ever did to John Byrne. I must have done something to him, or he thinks I did. I don't know what my crime was. I know he doesn't like me anymore, but why isn't anyone calling him on this?

Some people say you had nothing to do with Marvel's royalty plan.

Well, you know. .I wrote it. It was typed on my secretary's typewriter Do you think it was done over my objections? Ask Stan. He was there in that room with me when I pitched it to Shelly Feinberg. Frank Miller wasn't. John Byrne wasn't. If your work is popular, you have moral authority for some reason. I don't know why that is. There seems to be precious little interest in the truth, and more interest in this Good Guys/Bad Guys drama. But that's comics, isn't it? The people who I work with know better, and the people who rely on hearsay probably aren't worth dealing with anyway.

You were also challenged on your claim that Marvel was the first company to publish a graphic novel.

I said we were the first major publisher to publish a graphic novel, and somebody said, "Eclipse did it first." Eclipse wasn't even a comics publisher, let alone a major comics publisher. It was the first thing they ever did Some say National Lampoon or Byron Preiss did them first, but neither one is a major comics publisher, so I still have them on a technicality. What I should have said was first major North American comic book publisher, because they've been doing them in Europe for decades. Why that was worth all the ink it got, I don't know.

I don't think anyone will dispute that you invented the massive company-wide crossover

[Laughs] Although I think I'm more blamed for that than credited

Do you think it's gotten out of hand?

I think it got out of hand right away After I did *Secret Wars II* [at Marvel], as far as I'm concerned, it became a nightmare. They were happening all over the place. They didn't tie in particularly well to anything. A lot of them ended up not meaning anything I think that *Unity* was good, but most of them are bad

At one point, didn't you try to buy Marvel?

Marvel looked like it was going to be on the block again, so I put together a team and tried to buy it. I knew that New World [which had bought the company from Cadence] had grossly mismanaged it, and the company could potentially be another Disney We bid $81 million, and Ronald Perelman bid $82 5 million, and now he owns it and it has a market capitalization of two or three billion. I think he pulled all the easy triggers. His troops played right into all the collector mania and did a lot of short-term things, rather than concentrating on being creative. I think that a lot of what he did is illusory, but it at least demonstrated that the potential was there.

You started Valiant in 1990 and left in 1993, do you still read any of the Valiant comics?

Not really They don't even send me copies of the reprints. Now *these* guys don't give me any credit. They list me as "writer" when they reprint something and, if you ask them, I didn't have anything to do with creating any of it. It's funny. All these champions of creators' rights are making noise about how Kirby was ripped off and Ditko was ripped off A great rip-off happened right in front of them, so why is no one appalled by what Valiant did to me and a few other creative people? I guess that's the price of being a pariah

It wasn't long before you bounced back with another new company, Defiant in 1993, which wasn't quite the success that Valiant had been.

I made some mistakes. I got involved with a very bad trading card deal that damaged us in the marketplace. The work I did for the trading cards made us late, so we were always playing catch-up ball, and we never really did the work as good as we should have done

Your first offering, *Warriors of Plasm*, was initially a substantial hit, but things went downhill fairly rapidly from there.

We sold 550,000 copies of #1, but the very month we launched was the month the entire market sort of slid off the edge of a table, and contracted to something like a third of its former size. In that climate, it's tough for anybody to succeed.

People have said that part of the problem with Defiant is that from its inception it was a company-wide crossover

What we tried to do was have continuity in the same sense that we had at Valiant, but we didn't do it well enough Partly because, unlike at Valiant, we were using a lot of writers. Unless you get just the right guys and they work together real well, it doesn't happen. You get way too many complications and not enough sense of the world, that incidental continuity which is so nice.

Essentially, the Defiant Universe revolved around two basic concepts the Org and the Dark Dominion

Both of which were sort of one concept, which was the powers of the id. If you will, at Valiant I did powers of the mind. At Defiant, I tried to take the next step to the worlds of the subconscious. That was a pretty tough row to hoe

There was also quite an uproar over the fact that #0 issues were released as card sets, as well as the marketing of the binders.

My partner was in the card business, and wanted to do those things. It's hard to deny somebody who's put up the money and then asks you for a favor We got in over our heads. The marketing of their stuff, which was out of my control, managed to annoy everybody

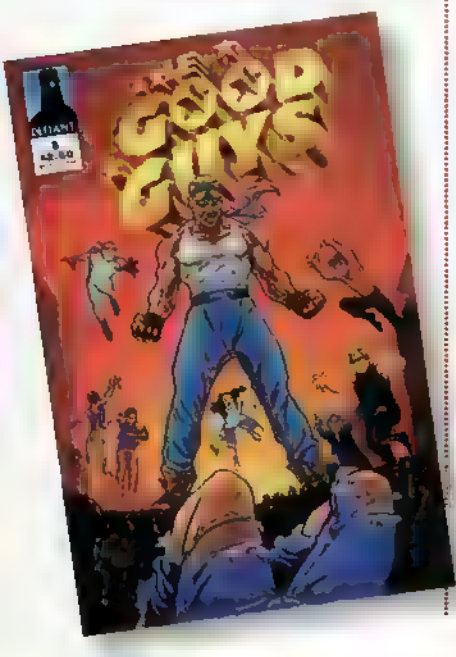
How did Defiant finally fall apart?

We got to the point where we needed new financing, and found that there was no shortage of interested people. We had two

"All these champions of creators' rights are making noise about how Kirby was ripped off and Ditko was ripped off. A great rip-off happened right in front of them, so why is no one appalled by what Valiant did to me and a few other creative people?"

SOLAR: MAN OF THE ATOM and [illegible]US ROBOT FIGHTER ™ & © Western Publishing. ARCHER & ARMSTRONG, SHADOWMAN, and X-O MANOWAR ™ & © Voyager Communications, Inc

A SAMPLING OF SHOOTER'S OFFERINGS FROM DEFIANT.



very large home entertainment companies willing to invest a great deal of money and still leave me basically in control. They were great deals. However, the previous investors in Defiant couldn't accept those deals, for one reason or another, and after months and months of negotiation and considerable haggling over pennies, the deal fell through at the end of the summer of 1994. At that point, we ran out of money, so I had to let go all the employees, and do my best to settle up with people we owed money to. We successfully paid every single individual freelancer and employee every penny they were owed, except me. I didn't get paid the last two and half months I worked there. We owe a lot of money to printers and other people, and it remains to be seen how much of that we'll be able to pay, because there's still a disposing of assets going on, trying to raise money to pay people, so we'll see how that comes out.

How did you hook up with Broadway Video?

Broadway Video, whose owner Lorne Michaels is partners with NBC on *Saturday Night Live*, is the largest independent film producer on the East Coast. They're a major television producer and they have a lot of merchandising ability and connections with interactive and video game companies, and they have a huge video production center—probably one of the best in the world. They were interested in starting a comic book company. I actually went to them at the last minute to see if they would be willing to step in and make an investment in Defiant. They really weren't. They were interested in starting a company, and in fact had hired most of the people that I was forced to lay off. A month or so later, when my contract terminated and I went looking for a job, I went to Broadway Video. They hired me on a temporary basis to work with my old crew on the development of a property that they were trying to get the rights for. That went well, and we got along very well. They were intrigued enough by the business that they wanted to start a comics division, and were willing to make a good enough deal with me and my people to make it worth our while. We are partners, in a sense, with Broadway Video, and we are going to run the new comics division and, in a strange way, the people of Defiant have sort of gotten to where we would have been if Defiant had actually succeeded in making one of those deals with a big media company. We're making comics, and we're allied with a giant film entertainment company. So who could ask for anything more? Merry Christmas, Jim.

What do you plan on doing differently with Broadway Comics?

I really think the comics market has changed. The days where it had to be a guy in long underwear smashing some other guy in long underwear are over. A lot of new avenues are opening up. I feel that we can do superheroes, but we're certainly not limited to that. The books we do in-house, because I am who I am and I do what I do, will probably tend to have some superhero/science fiction/action-adventure nature to them, but there's less of an imperative to have that universe concept.

We've developed about 11 properties already, including Electropolis, Fatale, Technomancers, and The Powers that Be. But this time, it's a whole different ball game. It's not the kind of situation where you only have so much money, and the money's running out, and you've got to produce revenues and it's got to be right now, so you've got to make compromises all over the place, just to pay the bills. These people aren't like that. They said, "We'd really like it if you never published a comic book until it was exactly the way you wanted it to be." First time in my life. I've been doing this for 30 years, and there's not a single comic book I can hold up and say, "this is the way I thought it should be." Now that's the mandate, and the other mandate is to go ahead and do all the fun stuff, without having to build a universe of titles first that produces enough revenues to allow you to go out and work with creator-owned properties.

At Marvel we stabilized the main line, and then did [the creator-owned line of] Epic Comics. Now, I'm starting there. It's going to be a lot of fun working with guys like... well, I better not say any names until we have them signed up, but we have some pretty big guys we're talking to. We've got five or six creator-owned projects in various stages of development. It's about as far and wide-ranging as it could be.

What about the Defiant characters?

They're still partly owned by my old partner, so the rights are in limbo.

When do you expect the first Broadway comic to be on the stands?

August.

Given the current market downturn, do you think now is the right time to start a new company?

I think when everybody else is retreating, it's a great time to attack. I think the art form is still strong. I think there's not enough good stuff out there, so if we can come up with some really good, entertaining stuff, we'll revolutionize the business. We'll take it by storm. ☆

Mich.-based writer Paul J. Grant always wanted to join the Legion of Super-Heroes as a Long John Silver impersonator named Argh, Jim Lad.

DARK DOMINION, WARRIORS OF PLASM and THE GOOD GUYS ™ & © © Independent Entertainment Partners

by Lea Hernandez

manga 101:

A Beginner's Guide to Nosebleeds, Nuclear Explosions, and Sparkly Tears

To new readers of manga and viewers of anime, some of the visuals can be baffling—giant, Disney-esque eyes, hair colors never seen outside of a punk rock concert, and more explosions than your average Terminator film. Some of the origins of these pictorial shorthand expressions are obvious, while others are so obscure nobody knows for sure where they started. Knowing what they mean can greatly enhance reading and watching manga and anime. You won't have to puzzle over what a nosebleed means, but can instead focus on absorbing storylines and characters.

A couple of the many explosions in *Akira*.

Manga and anime visuals

BIG EYES Eyes are considered to be the windows of the soul. The larger they are, the more expressive (in theory) they can be. Large eyes in manga probably started with the late Dr. Osamu Tezuka's Disney animation-influenced manga. Comics readers used to smaller eyes in American comics might find the comparatively huge ones in manga distracting, since bigger eyes are generally "cuter," and Americans are not used to seeing cute art juxtaposed with serious or semi-serious stories.

FUNNY HAIR COLORS/FUNNY HAIR This is one of those inexplicable things about manga and anime. Some characters simply have weird hair. About 10 years ago, hair that covered one eye, with the eye still showing through, was common. So was a huge lock of hair that moved from side to side, depending on which way the character turned his head. Now, hair is off the forehead, but it still looks as if anime/manga characters won a lifetime supply of hair gel. Anime and manga hair still comes in all colors of the rainbow, and there's no discernible connection between hair color and character type, with pink being the notable exception—pink-haired characters are always cute and sexy, or at least they're supposed to be.

BIG TEARS These are tears that come out of a character's eyes in two giant arcs, and are sort of the Japanese equivalent to the Warner Brothers gag of a character crying so much, he/she cries a puddle or an entire river. Big tears can be pretty astonishing the first time you see them. It's another thing about anime and manga that you'll either get used to or that'll jar you every time you see it.

SPARKLY TEARS Straight from romance comics come sparkly tears. These are tears that come out in a shimmering spray, but are only shed by female characters. (It's kind of hard to imagine, say, M. Bison from *Street Fighter II* blinking out some sparkly tears.)

FANGS. A character grows fangs when he/she is annoyed, or sometimes when plotting something rotten. You'll never see fangs in a serious story.

NOSE BLEEDS The most mysterious of all Japanese visuals! A nosebleed indicates that a character is having naughty thoughts. Nobody seems to know where this started.

PANTY SHOTS When it comes to titillation, the Japanese are much more subtle. A stray wind catches a schoolgirl's uniform skirt and the whole world knows what day of the week it is! This was a scene played out much more often before anime and manga than in real life. It was also a scene played out much more often before anime and manga artists invented different ways to show a girl or woman's underclothes, like having them fall down, bend over, or simply dispensing with a skirt altogether and clothing girls in no more than bikini bottoms. It's not a whole lot different from American superheroines with their tiny adhesive tops and dental-floss-like thongs.

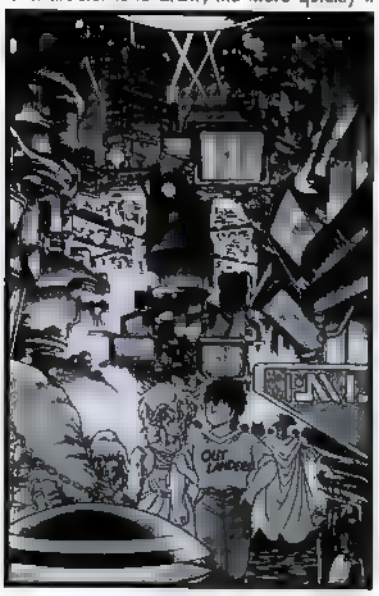
EXPLOSIONS Even a cursory examination of action-oriented anime shows that the Japanese animate explosions like nobody's business. Why explosions? They're not mysterious when you take into account that street crime is virtually unknown in Japan and that the Japanese are, except in special circumstances, very reserved. Like Americans, they put things into their entertainment that they don't see or experience every day.

Speaking specifically about manga

FASHION SHOTS: A convention borrowed from shojo-manga (girl's comics), is the large figure running down the side of a page, either slightly overlapping panels, or entirely apart from them. In girl's comics this was to

show a character's clothes without interrupting story flow and the fashion shot is now present in virtually every manga genre from romance to action

CARTOONY CHARACTERS/REALISTIC BACKGROUNDS: In most Japanese comics, the characters seem to be cartoonier than their American counterparts and are certainly cartoony in comparison to their backgrounds. Part of the reason is expediency: the simpler a character is to draw, the more quickly it



can be drawn, and in the high volume demand of the manga market, speed is essential. Manga also contains a discipline entirely separate from drawing and writing: background art. An artist will typically have a battery of assistants at his disposal, including artists to ink background characters (artists often ink their main characters), and artists to draw in backgrounds themselves—which can include things like cars and interiors as well as the average city street. Any one of these is considered an art in and of itself

Finally, it's simply a matter of style. It's just the way Japanese comics are.

BLACK-AND-WHITE Most Japanese comic companies produce volumes the size of telephone books on a weekly and monthly basis. Even though some of these books sell millions, producing them with more than a few color pages a week (or month) would be prohibitively expensive. And, once again, there is that time factor; killer deadlines are easier to meet when the step of adding color isn't part of the process.

PANEL COUNT The production schedule time factor strikes again. Panel count is low in manga in order for artists to meet deadlines. American artists are accustomed to meeting deadlines of between 22-32 pages of penciled art per month. A Japanese artist often has to produce 32 pages of penciled, inked, and lettered art a week. While low panel count has become more common in American comics, it seems to be geared more towards incorporating large character shots, rather than for speed.

Of course, there are exceptions to low panel count: any Masamune Shirow (*Appleseed, Dominion, Ghost in the Shell*) or Hayao Miyazaki (*Nausicaa*) manga has pages that contain typically 10 panels or more

PACING: While some Japanese comics that have been translated for the American market seem to be readable in 5 minutes—but as a whole move with glacial slowness—the reality is that in Japan, they were also read in five minutes, but probably in installments that came weekly rather than monthly (or even bi-monthly). Most manga translated for the American market is specifically scouted from monthly manga rather than weeklies, so the pacing approximates an American comic.

So there you have it, a quick intro to the quirks and nuances of manga and anime. This should help enhance your enjoyment Happy reading and viewing ☆

Lea Hernandez has lettered and retouched manga for 10 years and serves as moderator of Japanese animation and manga for the online service Genie. Special thanks to Toren and Tomoko Smith for their help in preparing this column.

Johji Manabe's *Caravan Kidd* have typical backgrounds (left) and traits, big eyes, weird hair (*even a tail!*), and a skimpy costume.

pick of the month

video: *My Neighbor Totoro*

(Fox Video)

A big part of the reason I'm recommending *My Neighbor Totoro* is because it's been released by Fox Video. Since Fox isn't considered "cult" or "specialty," unlike (unfortunately) many other distributors of anime, this means that it will be available in most video stores, even ones that don't have an animation section. Just look under "kids." But don't let the location where you find this video put you off. *Totoro* is a neophyte anime watcher's chance to start at the top, since *Totoro* is the work of one of the greatest animation directors in Japan, Hayao Miyazaki. Miyazaki has directed some of the most beloved animated films in Japan, including the eco-table *Nausicaa*, the fairy tale-like *Little Witch Kiki*, and *Laputa*.

Totoro is the name of the king of the forest in this charming story. He is discovered by two sisters when they come to live in the country while they wait for their mother to return from the hospital Most of the plot is the sister's maybe/maybe-not imaginary adventures with Totoro in the woods around their home. Again, don't be fooled by words like "charming" and "kid's section." *Totoro* is so beautifully animated, and contains such sophisticated images, that it can be enjoyed by both adults and kids.

AKIRA © MASH•ROOM Co, Ltd and Kodansha Ltd. Tokyo. MY NEIGHBOR TOTORO © Tokuma Publishing and Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation CARAVAN KIDD ™ & © Johji Manabe and Studio Kotsudan. English translation © 1994 Studio Proteus and Dark Horse Comics.

TOYING around • around • around • around

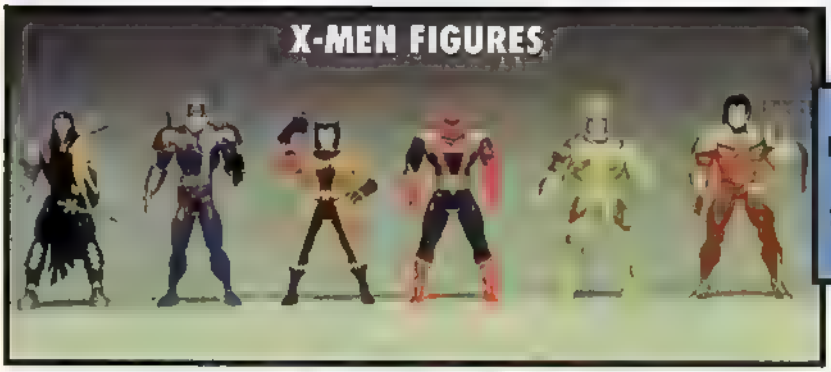
WITH SEAN AUNE

Toy Fair '95 Report

February's Toy Fair boasted tons of new stuff, and it delivered as promised, including new lines and line extensions (new releases for an already existing line). A quick word of warning, though: ALL these items are tentative. Assortments may change, items may never be produced even after they have been shown, and release dates are always subject to change. With that out of the way, let's jump right into the goodies from 1995's Toy Fair.

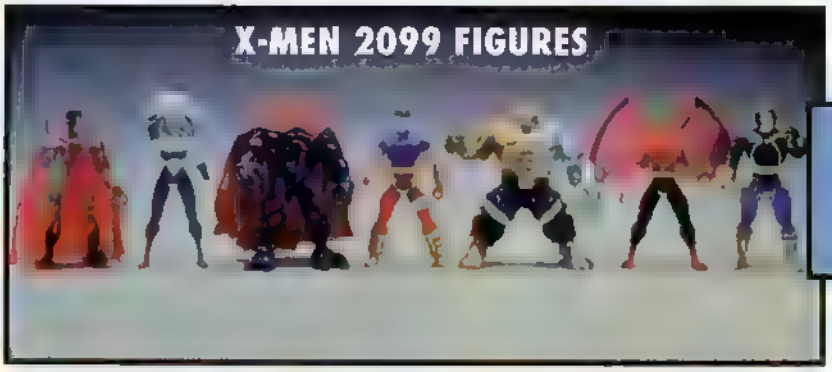
Toy Biz

The ever-popular Toy Biz company blasts out with over 100 different figures this year, including, at long last, a Ghost Rider series! Here are all the figures, broken down by toy line. As of press time, no release dates had been set. As soon as we have the dates, we will print 'em.



(l. to r.) Cameron Hodge Phalanx, Maverick, Wolverine (Fang Costume), Senyaka, Sunfire (the Timeflip version), & X-Cutioner.

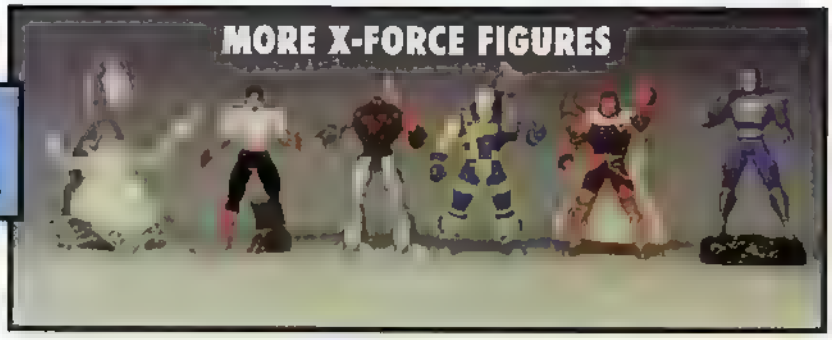
(l. to r.) Archangel II, Sabretooth III (Captive), Iceman II, Wolverine (Battle Ravaged), Eric the Red, Havok, & Spiral.



(l. to r.) Controller 13, La Lunática, Brimstone Love, Meanstreak, Metalhead, Bloodhawk, & Skullfire.

All figures shown above ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Background Art ™ & © Eclipse.

(l. to r.) Nimrod, Tyler Apocalypse III (this is ONE FIGURE), Caliban, Cable Cyborg, Domino, Deadpool II, & Blob.



(l. to r.) Mojo, Black Tom, Commando, Urban Assault Cable, Exodus, & Avalanche.

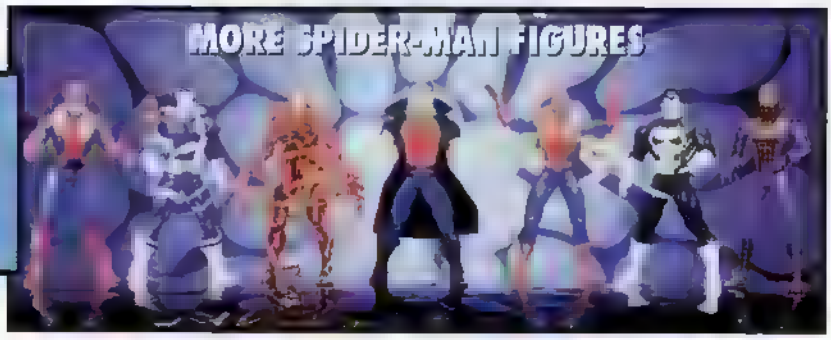
Other photos not shown include Corsair, Gladiator, Phoenix, Warstar, and Wolverine (Space Armor), and Generation X: Banshee II, Chamber, Emplate, Jubilee, Penance, Phalanx, and Skin.

The Classic X-Men figures (reissues of older figures with new accessories) include Beast, Cyclops II, Gambit, Magneto II, Storm (now painted all white), and Wolverine II.

X-Men playsets and vehicles include X-Men Headquarters, which offers lots of play area and folds up to resemble a large canister with a handle, which can then be used as a carrying case. Then there's the Mini-Blackbird Jet for one figure, and the Wolverine Jeep, which is painted yellow with numerous weapons.

And, hey, we can't forget the 15-inch Electronic Talking Wolverine!

(l. to r.) Mysterio, Spider-Man (Black Costume), Chameleon, Spider-Man (Web Glider), Venom II (Eddie Brock Head), & Prowler.



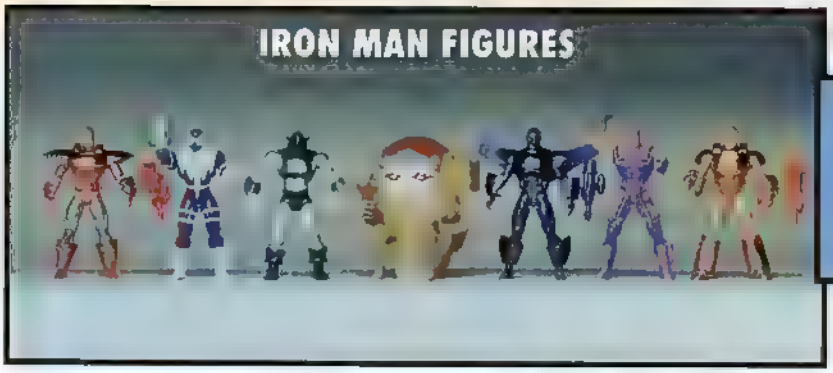
(l. to r.) Spider-Man (Battle Ravaged), Nick Fury, Carnage II, Morbius, Spider-Man (Six-Arm), Punisher, & Spider-Man (Spider Sense .

Other photos not shown include Green Goblin, Rhino, Scorpion Shocker, Spider-Man (Multi-Jointed), and Spider-Man (Spider Armor).

Spider-Man 10-inchers include Spider-Man, Spider Sense Spider-Man, and Web Hanging Spidey The Spidey Motorized Mini-Vehicles include a Hobgoblin Pumpkin Bomber, Spider-Man Wheelie Cycle, and the Venom Assault Racer.

All figures shown above ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

IRON MAN FIGURES



(l. to r.) Iron Man (Hologram), Blizzard, Whirlwind, Modok, Iron Man (Stealth Armor), Hawkeye, & Iron Man (Space Armor).

MORE IRON MAN FIGURES

(l. to r.) USAgent, Iron Man (Arctic Armor), Century, Iron Man (Hulkbuster), Titanium Man, Tony Stark, & Dreadknight.

FANTASTIC FOUR FIGURES

(l. to r.) Gorgon, Dragon Man, Human Torch, Thanos, Invisible Woman, Firelord, & Blastaar.

MORE FANTASTIC FOUR FIGURES

(l. to r.) Annihilus, Adam Warlock, Thing II, Namor The Sub-Mariner, Super Skrull, Attuma, & Triton.

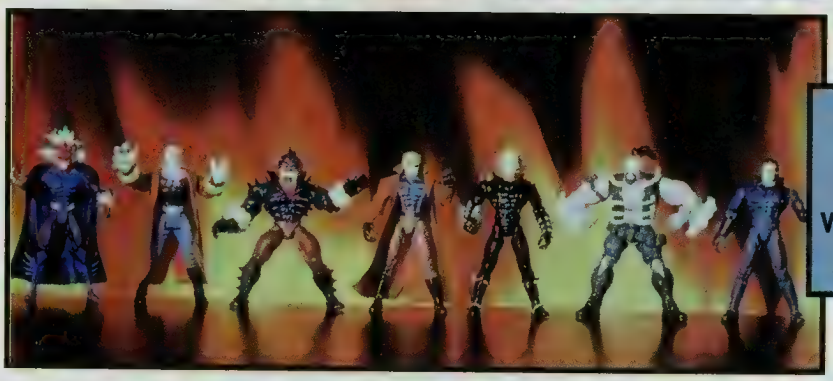
Iron Man 10-inchers include Iron Man, Mandarin, and War Machine. And you can't forget about the 7-inch dragons: Argent the Silver Dragon, Aureus the Gold Dragon, and the dreaded Fin Fang Foom! (Cool!)

Fantastic Four 10-inch figures are Dr. Doom, Human Torch, and Silver Surfer, while the vehicles and playsets include the Fantasticar (with interchangeable modules to form different vehicles), Mr. Fantastic's Sky Shuttle, and the Thing's Sky Cycle. And we can't forget about an awesome-looking Galactus figure, which stands at 14 inches! A perfect gift for anybody who likes to eat planets for breakfast. Oh, and there's a 14-inch Talking Thing, too.

Other 10-inch Marvel figures include Iron Man (Space Armor), Mysterio, Rogue, Spider-Man (Spider Armor), Thing, Wolverine (Space Armor), Archangel II, Johnny Storm, Punisher, Spider-Man (Super Poseable), Tony Stark (Techno Suit), and Wolverine (Battle Ravaged).

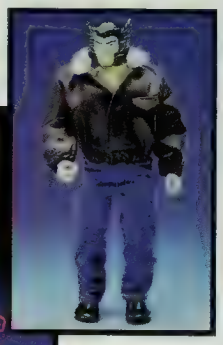
This year's assortment of Marvel Projectors include Beast, Iron Man, Lizard, Thing, Wolverine (Civilian), Bishop, Cable, Dr. Octopus, Mr. Sinister, and Spider-Man (Spider Sense).

All figures shown above ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group



Top left: Fin Fang Foom. Top right: The Fantasticar. (l. to r.) Zarathos, Blackout, Vengeance, Blaze, Ghost Rider, Skinner, & Danny Ketch.

The 12" Collectible Figures with removable outfits include Spider-Man (top) and Wolverine.



The two-and-a-half-inch die-cast figures include Civilian Wolverine Vs. Silver Samurai, Iron Man Vs. Mandarin, Mr. Fantastic Vs. Dr. Doom, Rogue Vs. Pyro, Spider-Man Vs. Lizard, Spider-Man Vs. Smythe, Thing Vs. Blastaar, Beast Vs. Evil Morph, Human Torch Vs. Dragon Man, Longshot Vs. Mojo, Silver Surfer Vs. Terrax, Spider-Man Vs. Kingpin, Spider-Man Vs. Vulture, and War Machine Vs. Modok.

Toy Biz is also releasing two Marvel 12-inch Collectable Figures, which have removable clothing, allowing you to interchange between two versions of each character. The two are Wolverine with yellow tiger-stripe costume and street clothes, along with Spider-Man with the full red-and-blue costume and Peter Parker clothes.

And there will also be Toy Biz's Marvel Dress-Up Kits; these are Halloween "role playing" costume sets for adventure-loving kids, including Iron Man, Thing, and Wolverine.

Ghost Rider 10-inch figures include Blaze, Ghost Rider, and Vengeance. And then there're Ghost Rider Stunt Cycles—pull the ripcord and let them go! Each of the Ghost Rider vehicles comes with a previously released figure, but in a different paint job. Also, there will be a set of cycles without ripcords (you'll be able to just roll them), and different figures from the ripcorded cycles. The figures on both types of vehicles include Blaze, Ghost Rider, and Vengeance. Finally, the Ghost Rider Stunt Playset includes a transformation chamber for Ghost Rider, break-away ladder, crash-through window, car catapult, firing gun, and bike launcher.

All figures shown above ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

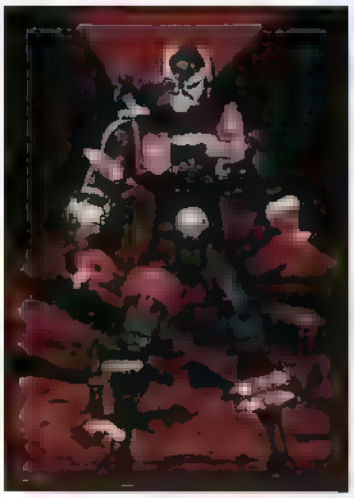
Todd Toys

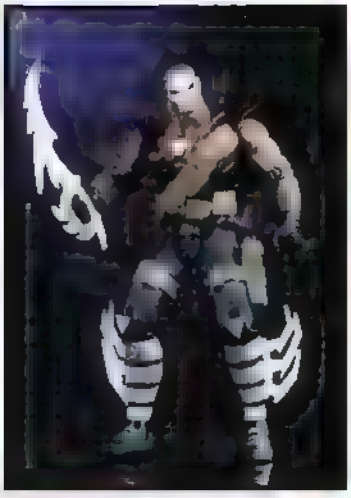
TMP Productions has changed its name to Todd Toys, and has returned with a whole slew of new figures based on Spawn by Todd McFarlane, Youngblood by Rob Liefeld, and WetWorks by Whilce Portacio. Figures you should expect to see are Unmasked Spawn, Tremor in new colors, Medieval Spawn in more metallic colors, Overtkill in new colors, Commando Spawn, Chapel, Angela, Badrock, Malebolgia, Pilot Spawn, Spawn with fold-out wings, Violator with bionic implants, Vaporizer, The Curse, Ninja Spawn, Cosmic Angela, The Redeemer, and Future Spawn. Proposed future releases include Vertebreaker, Xeo-Tor, and Vandalizer.

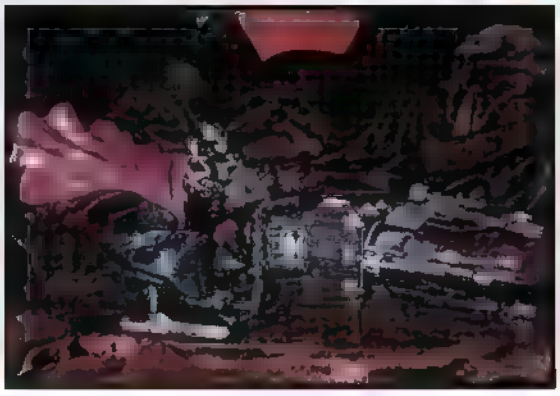
Vehicles include Spawn Air Cycle with Pilot Spawn, and Violator Chopper with Violator.

The WetWorks line, due out in August, features Dane, Dozer, Mother One, Vampire, Werewolf, and Grail. The Youngblood line, also due in August, are Troll, Dutch, Die Hard, Shaft, Crypt, and Sentinel.

That's it for this month. We will be back next month with even more reports from Toy Fair. Until then, see you in aisle 7C!







Top row, from left to right: Pilot Spawn, Malebolgia, Angela; middle row: Commando Spawn, Badrock, Chapel; last row: Violator with Violator Chopper and Pilot Spawn with Air Cycle.

Spawn is a trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions. All other figures shown above ™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions. Badrock & Chapel ™ & © Rob Liefeld.

HOMEMADE HEROES

For taking a whole load o' regular-lookin' toys and creating such spectacular homemade versions of their favorite characters, everyone whose figure sees print this month wins a copy of *Robin* (series) #1 signed by Tom Grummett and a copy of *Aquaman* #0 signed by Peter David. The two runner-ups win all of that neat stuff plus a set of the 10-inch Toy Biz Wolverine, Sabretooth, and Cyclops figures, a copy of *Marvels* #0 signed by Alex Ross, and a copy of *Ash* #1 signed by Joe Quesada. The Grand Prize winner wins alla that stuff *plus* a limited edition, porcelain Wolverine statue by Randy Bowen! **Thanks for the awesome statue Randy!** Congrats to all!

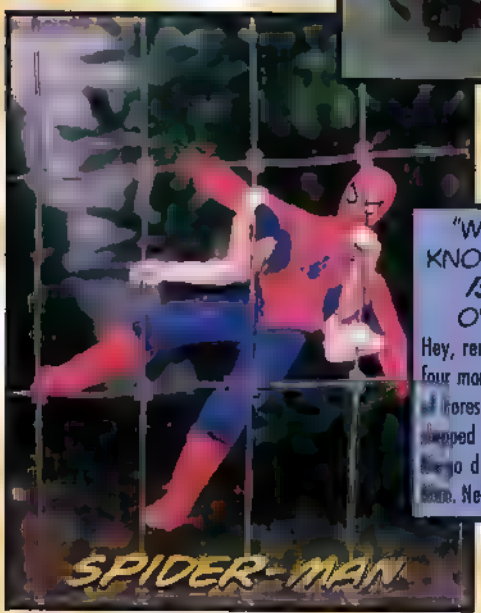
THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

"YELLOW, HUH? IF I HAD PUPILS, I'D KICK YOUR ASS!"
Hailing from Mortal Kombat II, Scorpion was made by Robert Chiang of Santa Carla, Calif. We have no idea what Robert made him outta, though.

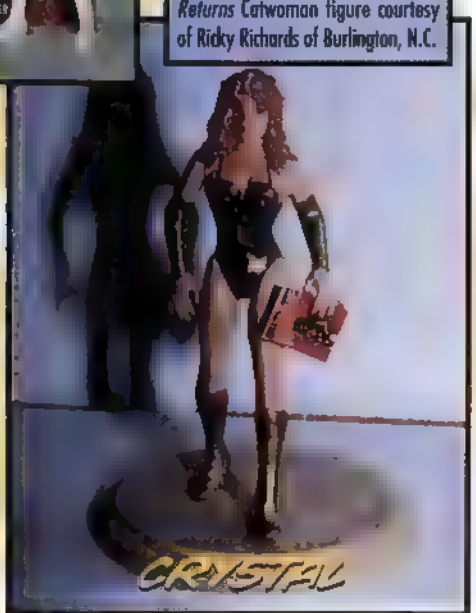
"CAN'T...BREATHE... SOMEBODY...BUY...ME!"
Alejandro Castilla of Oxnard, Calif., not only made a White Queen out of a Toy Biz Invisible Woman, but crafted a nice carton for it to come in, too. But Alejandro's either got a lisp, or else he needs a better copy editor!

"CAN YOU FEEEEL THE LOVE TONIGHT?" "SHUT UP, FOOL!"
Argent the wolf and his nemesis, Grendel, were crafted by Jamie Ziebarth of Cordova, Tenn. Argent used to be a Playmates TMNT Rahzar, and Grendel was a Toy Biz Deadpool.

"Y'KNOW, I DON'T JUST HAVE A GREAT BODY. I'VE ALSO GOT LOTS OF BRANS—I MEAN BRAINS!"
Crystal, our *Wizard* spokesmodel, was made from a Kenner *Batman Returns* Catwoman figure courtesy of Ricky Richards of Burlington, N.C.



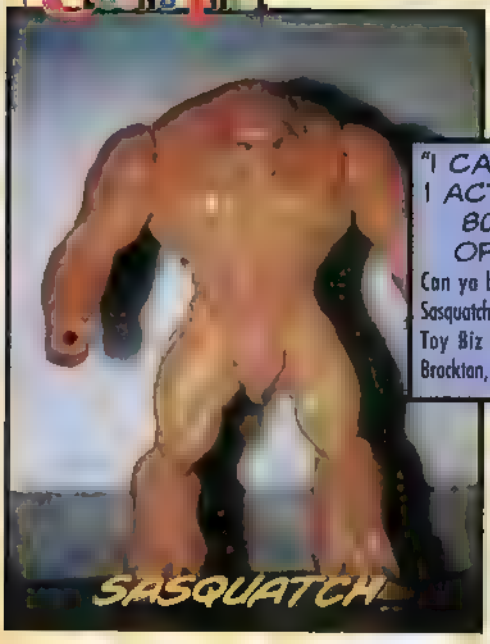
"WHAT DO YOU KNOW, THE GRASS *IS* GREENER OVER THERE!"
Hey, remember when Spidey grew four more arms? Well, Lonnie Fisher of Forest Grove, Ore., does. He just stapled a couple of arms from other Mego dolls on to a Mego Spider-Man. Neat.



White Queen & Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Crystal ™ & © Wizard Press. Argent & Grendel ™ & © Matt Wagner. Scorpion ™ & © Midway/Bally.

"YOU CAN FEEL IT. IT'S ELECTRIC. BOOGIE, WOOGIE, WOOGIE."

The Maxx, here, was made by Jamie Hazel (that's two Jamies in Homemade Heroes—how 'bout that?) of Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. He used a Mattel He-Man figure.

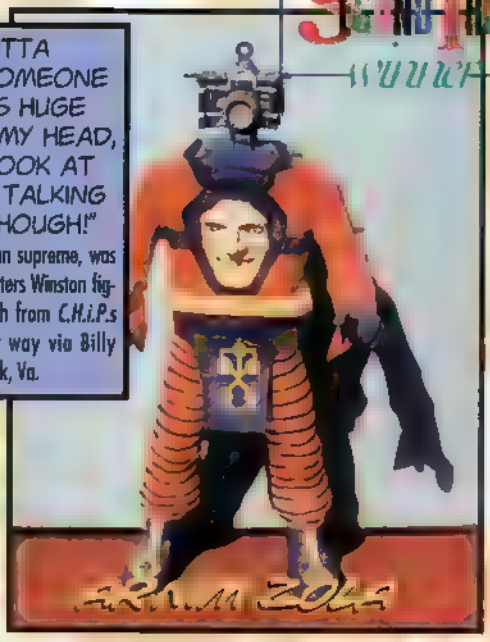


"I CAN'T BELIEVE I ACTUALLY ATE 80 POUNDS OF BACON!"

Can ya believe Alpha Flight's Sasquatch used to be a really lame Toy Biz Tusk? Trevor Ellis of Brockton, Mass., made 'im.

"AND OUTTA NOWHERE, SOMEONE DROPS THIS HUGE CAMERA ON MY HEAD, AND NOW LOOK AT ME! IT'S FUN TALKING TO GIRLS, THOUGH!"

Armin Zola, fascist villain supreme, was once a Kenner Ghostbusters Winston figure (with a Mego Ponch from *C.H.i.P.s* head). He comes our way via Billy Hadder of Manassas Park, Va.



"BUT MADGE, THEY'RE SO SOFT!"

For the second month in a row, Grand Prize Winner Chris Spaseff of Tempe, Ariz., does his magic with the Ultraverse's nastiest villain, Lord Pumpkin. How'd he make 'im so nice an' purty? Well, Chris used a Toy Biz Joker figure an' some cool sculpting stuff to take the prize. Congrats!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (again, no Polaroids!) to:

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

The Maxx ™ & © Sam Kieth. Sasquatch & Armin Zola ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Lord Pumpkin ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.

PALMER'S PICKS

Strange Brew

It is almost impossible to categorize the work of Don Simpson into a simple description like "outlandish parody" or "serious superhero comics." His comics have ranged from the relentless humor of *Megaton Man* to hard science fiction in *Border Worlds*, with notable dips into straight superheroes and even underground/erotic comics. Instead of keeping all of these disparate comics separate, Simpson has decided to bring them all together into one "universe" with *Bizarre Heroes*, a self-published monthly comic.

Bizarre Heroes is one of the few comics published today that recognizes the inherent fun of superheroes. The comic features Megaton Man, Simpson's most well-known hero, as well as a cast of unforgettable characters like X-Ray Boy (who got his powers from a pair of novelty X-ray specs), the Phantom Jungle Girl (who could have been pulled from a '50s adventure comic), and the Meddler (a mysterious character shrouded in bandages and a cape).

The main plotline of Simpson's new comic springs from a one-shot comic published in 1990 by Kitchen Sink called, oddly enough, *Bizarre Heroes*. Basically, Simpson's heroes must overcome Project Mainstream, an evil plot to take over the world with an army of superpowered "megaclones" who are superior to their human counterparts. While the heroes of Simpson's universe may eventually overcome the evil clones, Simpson states that "they won't be able to get rid of them all. It's sort of an underlying theme that there will always be these bad guys out there that will periodically 'break out.' I've intentionally left the identities of a lot of the clones unknown."

Simpson has united his characters under one common story, but assembling all of them is not as simple as it sounds. One of the most difficult things for Simpson to resolve with *Bizarre Heroes* is the difference between his serious superheroes like the Meddler and the Slick and the not-so-serious Megaton Man and Yarn Man. "I can almost date them. The Slick and the Meddler come from junior high school, and Megaton Man come in the early '80s when I had outgrown superheroes. For me, it's neat to have characters I created in high school. There's less of a parody feel to it than some of the older stuff has. It's a genuine affection for the superhero myth."

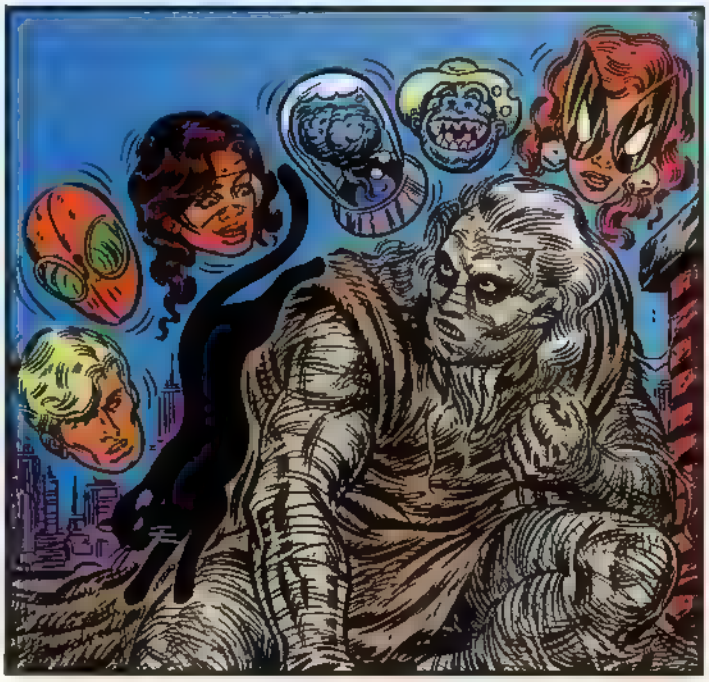
Simpson relates that with Megaton Man, "I was trying to parody and ridicule superhero comics and exaggerate them. I thought I was being very iconoclastic, but the thing that I've discovered is that the whole superhero style today has sort of gone so far beyond what I was making fun of." Simpson is inspired by the smooth and efficient comic art from classic superhero comics, but he feels that "today's style has a techno, hard-edged feel. I just can't do that. I do this kind of brushy, old-fashioned-looking stuff that harkens back to the early '70s. So, people can't really tell if I'm being serious or not when I draw."

With *Bizarre Heroes*, Simpson is able to emulate the careers of his idols, like Jack Kirby, Neal Adams, John Romita Sr., and other artists from the '60s and '70s. "The guys I wanted to be like in comics were guys like Romita or Kirby. They did everything. They'd do Spider-Man for a while and then they'd move to the Avengers. That's what I wanted to do. I didn't want to do Megaton Man all the time. As popular as he is, I've always had this dilemma in my career. My comic would be a lot more commercially viable if I just called it *Megaton Man*." Simpson sees *Bizarre Heroes* as a compromise. He can switch characters whenever he wants to, but "people will only have one book to follow."

While *Bizarre Heroes* sounds like the perfect solution for the fan trying to find all of Don Simpson's work in one convenient place, there is a downside. "I find myself in sort of a no-man's land," Simpsons admits, "particularly with *Bizarre Heroes*. When I set out to do this, I thought there would be something for everybody.

With *Bizarre Heroes*, Don Simpson is able to emulate the careers of his idols, like Jack Kirby, Neal Adams, and John Romita Sr.

Some of Don Simpson's Bizarre Heroes.



By Tom Palmer Jr.

There would be enough Megaton Man for the Megaton Man fans, and some other stuff that would satisfy the fans of *1963*, *Savage Dragon vs. Megaton Man*, *Splitting Image*, or even *Wendy Whitebread* and my other [books published by] Eros." While *Bizarre Heroes* has a little bit for every fan, most people have a tough time figuring out how to describe the comic. "Is it an alternative comic, is it a superhero parody, or is it a serious superhero comic? It's all of these things intermittently," he notes, which has made the series difficult to classify specifically; readers may not be sure what to expect from it each month.

Instead of bringing *Bizarre Heroes* to a comic company, Simpson decided to form Fiasco Comics and self-publish the series. With many notable and respected creators turning to self-publishing recently, Simpson acknowledges that "there's the beginnings of a renaissance in self-publishing, but we're sort of victimized by our own success. There's almost too much good stuff to choose from." Simpson finds that he has a hard time getting shelf space in stores because "people aren't ordering stuff unless they have to. I've talked to a lot of retailers, and they mention that somewhere around 80 percent of their orders are for store subscriptions. These books don't get put onto the shelves. I could have the most incredible publicity in the world, but you go into a store and they won't have the book on the shelf."

Simpson doesn't get sidetracked by the difficulties of self-publishing. He acknowledges that he doesn't have a simple solution for the problems of the industry, but he promises to "keep my book coming out every month and get the book out there and available." Yes, *Bizarre Heroes* is definitely "out there"—a wild, no-holds-barred comic full of outrageous superheroes that's just plain fun to read. Isn't it time for you to go a little bizarre? ★

Tom Palmer Jr. is a 20-year-old freelance writer from New Jersey. He'd like to thank Stan for all of his kind words.

Above: Phantom Jungle Girl.
Top: The Slick.

PICK OF THE MONTH

***Peep Show #7*—**Just when you thought autobiographical comics were out of fashion, Joe Matt returns with another issue of his thoroughly enjoyable comic. Switching directions from the unflinching examination of every aspect of Matt's adult life that dominated previous issues, this issue looks at the obsessions of his pre-pubescent life. You can order a copy directly from Drawn & Quarterly Publications, 5550 Jeanne-Mance Street #16, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4K6 for $2.95.

Don Simpson's Recommended Reading: Here's a list of comics that Don Simpson enjoys. It may be short and sweet, but all of the books on the list are top-notch:

Jeff Smith's *Bone* from Cartoon Books, *Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre* by Batton Lash from Exhibit A Press, Bill Watterson's "Calvin & Hobbes" strip, syndicated in just about every newspaper in the country and collected in several book collections, Rick Veitch's *Rare Bit Fiends* from King Hell Press, *Tales of the Beanworld* by Larry Marder from Beanworld Press; and Steve Bissette's *Tyrant* from SpiderBaby Grafix & Publications.

Tom's Recommended Reading

***Bizarre Heroes*:** Don Simpson publishes *Bizarre Heroes* every month through Fiasco Comics. Issue #11 (pictured at right) will be out in May, and a trade paperback collecting the first four issues of *Bizarre Heroes* will be out in April. You should ask your local retailer to order *Bizarre Heroes*, but if you have trouble completing your collection, you can order directly from Fiasco Comics at PO Box 44326, Pittsburgh, PA 15205. All issues of *Bizarre Heroes* are $3, including issue #0—which reprints Kitchen Sink's *Bizarre Heroes* #1 from 1990—and the third printing of *Megaton Man* #1 from 1984. Six-issue subscriptions are also available for $18, and the trade paperback is $12.95. Simpson is also offering a 15" x 24" signed and numbered black-and-white print of 44 characters from *Bizarre Heroes* for $25. Fiasco Comics also carries select copies of Don Simpson's earlier work (including the original *Megaton Man* and various spin-offs, *Splitting Image*, *The Savage Dragon vs. The Savage Megaton Man*, *The Normalman/Megaton Man Special*, and *1963*). Write to Fiasco Comics for prices and availability.

BIZARRE HEROES, Phantom Jungle Girl, and The Slick ™ & © Don Simpson

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

Hey, kids, it's time once again to play some cruel tricks on your neighbors. Oh, sorry, it's actually comic book trivia time! Remember the failed attempt by Marvel Comics to create another superhero universe in 1986, called The New Universe? Well, what follows are 25 of the hardest New Universe questions ever slapped together by a band of chicanerous fanboys.

This time around, we're grading you against the worst failed comic book universes. The higher your score, the more miserably the universe failed.

score	rank
0-5	Star Comics
6-12	Epic's Heavy Hitters
13-19	Defiant
20-24	Dagger Comics
25	Ominous Press

1. Who was the original possessor of the Star Brand?
A) Ken Connell
B) The Old Man
C) Spitfire
D) Dr. Manhattan

2. "D.P." in *D.P. 7* means:
A) Doofy People.
B) Different People
C) Displaced Paranormals.
D) Dumb Poppycock.

3. The Pitt stood for:
A) The wasteland called New Jersey.
B) A gladiator battleground.
C) An alien race with no noses.
D) The destroyed city of Pittsburgh.

4. Who caused the Pitt?
A) Ken Connell
B) D.P. 7
C) Codename: Spitfire
D) Psi-Force

5. Who or what tagged along when Quasar left the New Universe?
A) Mastodon
B) An Antibody
C) The Star Brand
D) Both B & C

6. The Clinic was originally located in:
A) Ohio.
B) New York.
C) Wisconsin.
D) Washington.

7. What triggered everyone's powers in the New U?
A) Black Dawn
B) A nuclear meltdown
C) The White Event
D) A bad marketing ploy

8. What show was D.P. 7 member Viva watching when her powers were triggered?
A) *The Dukes of Hazzard*
B) *Good Times*
C) *Guiding Light*
D) *Joanie Loves Chachi*

9. What team did Charly Beck from D.P. 7 join briefly?
A) The Troubleshooters
B) The Black Powers
C) M.M.M.S.
D) The L.A. Dodgers

10. Which New Universe character had superspeed?
A) Flash
B) Speedfreak
C) Frijole
D) Blur

11. Mastodon had the hots for:
A) Viva.
B) Sally
C) Amóre.
D) Vanity.

12. Antibody was formerly employed as a:
A) Janitor.
B) Doctor.
C) Librarian.
D) Street urchin.

Background ™ & © their respective owners

13. Why did the New Universe suck?
A) No X-Men crossovers
B) No polybags
C) That stupid giant lightning bolt
D) What kind of pathetic name is "New Universe"?

14. The only good New Universe series was:
A) *D.P. 7.*
B) *Star Brand.*
C) Aww, forget it—none of 'em were any good, anyway. Move along.

15. Justice was:
A) a crappy alien.
B) some goofball guy from Cincinnati.
C) an Elton John fan.
D) a great character.

16. *Kickers, Inc.* starred:
A) A buncha wimps.
B) A former football star.
C) Characters who'd rather be dead than star in it.
D) All of the above

17. Who led the charge in *The War*?
A) Mastodon
B) Star Brand
C) Jack Magniconte
D) Sgt. Nick Fury

18. The Old Man was:
A) An alien.
B) Tom DeFalco.
C) A human being
D) Really a 16-year-old when he started reading all those New Universe titles!

19. Who had the better universe?
A) New Universe
B) Defiant
C) Triumphant
D) Who the hell are you kidding?

20. Which New Universe title was the first to get canned?
A) *Nightmask*
B) *Psi-Force*
C) *Merc*
D) Like the order in which they were canceled really matters!

21. Which movie did the premise in *Nightmask* most resemble?
A) *Nightmare on Elm Street: Part 3*
B) *Dreamscape*
C) *The Never Ending Story*
D) *Hollywood Hot Tubs*

22. Which of the following was not a member of Kickers, Inc.?
A) Mr. Magnificent
B) Suicide Smythe
C) Pete Punter
D) Dasher

23. Which New Universe title had a story entitled "The Robot in My Rose Garden"? (No, we're not kidding.)
A) *Kickers, Inc.*
B) *Spitfire and the Troubleshooters*
C) *Justice*
D) *Merc*

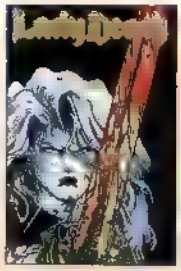
24. In the first issue of *Psi-Force*, who died to save the rest of the team?
A) Tyrone
B) Anastasia
C) Hawk
D) Wayne

25. The New Universe's slogan was:
A) "Nuke Me with the New!"
B) "Ain't Nothin' Like the Real Thing!"
C) "Who Watches the—oops, that one's already taken."
D) "Please Buy Our Books!" ☆

LADY DEATH ™ & © Brian Pulido. AVENGERS ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES ™ & © DC Comics. TEAM YOUNGBLOOD ™ & © Bob Lindell Inc.

MISSING LINK

WIN!
Lady Death #1



Each month, we list three comic book issues that contain something in common: in content, characters, creators, or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is.

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122, and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy, all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive a *Lady Death* #1, the premiere issue of the popular Bad Girl's first mini-series! So good luck, and good sleuthing! (And remember—you need to *read* the three books!)

Here are this month's batch o' books:

Avengers #381 (Double Feature ed.)

Legion of Super-Heroes (vol. 4) #49

Team Youngblood #6

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #45
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
***Hurry!* All entries must be received by June 30, 1995!**

CONGRATULATIONS to Michael Armendariz, of Delano, CA, the winner of issue #40's Missing Link! He read the three issues—*Adventures of Superman* #502, *Flash* (vol. 2) #91, and *Shadow of the Bat* #30—and realized that each of them featured a pivotal scene on a bridge! Good for you, Michael!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and whoever was responsible for *Highlander 3 (The Final Insult)*. Sorry isn't good enough! Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Missing Link #45, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. No, the answer is not "They're all team books." Keep tryin'. Buzzbrain. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on July 3, 1995, by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the winner's name, available after July 14, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #45 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

A	**N**	**S**	**W**	**E**	**R**	**S**			
1.B	2.C	3.D	4.A	5.D	6.C	7.C	8.C	9.B	
10.D	11.A	12.B	13.D	14.C	15.A	16.D	17.C	18.C	
19.D	20.C	21.B	22.C	23.A	24.C	25.A			

THE BIRTHQUAKE HITS YOUR HOME! (PART 1)

Take an already successful company, throw in eight fan-favorite artists, and you've got one hot buncha books! From *X-O Manowar* by Bart Sears to *The Visitor* by Bernard Chang, the folks at Acclaim Comics have signed on a load of hot artists to commemorate the excitement-heavy, change-filled "Birthquake," and they're willing to share these artists with you!

Here's the story...

Grand Prize (Two winners this month, two more winners next month!)

If you're one of this month's two randomly drawn winners, you'll be spending a day with a star! An Acclaim artist will fly to your hometown, and then you'll spend the rest of the day hanging out, traveling around your town, taking in lunch 'n' dinner, and having a blast! You'll definitely get to know each other, and you'll be the talk of your neighborhood. On top of everything, Acclaim will set up a signing at your local comic shop—you'll sit with and shmooze with the artist throughout the entire signing! This'll be one exciting, memorable day!

Now here's how you win this pulse-poundin' prize! This issue (and next), we'll show you exclusive illustrations by some of the eight top-name Acclaim artists—from Valiant, Bart Sears, Norm Breyfogle, Bernard Chang, Rags Morales, Mike Manley, Paul Gulacy, and Dan Jurgens, and from the new Windjammer imprint, Val Mayerik. Each artist's picture includes himself and his favorite character, in his well-known style. You comic knowledge overachievers should have no prob identifying the artist who drew each picture, and where he is in the picture! (And you'll get another chance next month!!)

So figure out who drew each piece and where he is in each one, then completely fill out the official entry form below, including the name of each artist (One of whom may be coming to your town!) in the correct space. Then rip out the two panels (or photocopy them) and circle the guy you think is the artist on each one. Throw it all in an envelope and ship it off to:

WIZARD®

Acclaim®

Part 1 of this two-part contest expires June 30, 1995, so get yourself goin'! And look for Part 2 in issue #46, coming next month!

Birthquake Contest 1
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

LEGAL STUFF

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Acclaim Comics, their immediate families, and people who celebrate half-birthdays. Get real. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and your answers on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card. Enclose the two panels with the circled artists. Mail each entry to Birthquake Contest 1, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Winners must accept arrangements on dates provided by Wizard Press or forfeit prize. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner [illegible] and [illegible] hereof. Anyone remember that cesarean lizard birth scene in the original V-TV-movie? Not something to eat dinner by. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected at a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on July 3, 1995, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners of Part 1 of this contest, available after July 14, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Birthquake Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching Wizard!

SOLAR: MAN OF THE ATOM™ & © Western Publishing. BLOODSHOT™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

Birthquake Contest 1

ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 30, 1995!

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY | STATE | ZIP

PHONE | DATE OF BIRTH

ARTIST #1 IS

ARTIST #2 IS

the Wizard of Cards

By Stephen Shamus

Todd McFarlane's Spawn, star of one of the hottest comic books around, will finally have his first trading card set out this April, produced by WildStorm Productions (makers of the All-Chromium WildStorm sets). These oversized 2 1/2-by-4 1/2" cards are drawn not only by Todd, but such industry giants as

Spawning a New Set

Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio, Bill Sienkiewicz, Jae Lee, Mike Grell, George Pérez, Jerry Ordway, Walter Simonson, Travis Charest, and (whew) J Scott Campbell. This should be an unbelievable collection of Spawn artwork. There will be plenty of chase cards, including 12 painted cards of the top Spawn characters, one in nine packs; six photographs of the megapopular Spawn toys, one in 18 packs, a ToddChrome card of Spawn in his new costume (debuting in issue #31 of his series), one per case, four New Art cards featuring exclusive new pieces of Spawn artwork by Todd McFarlane, one per box; and signed Jim Lee and Todd McFarlane cards, randomly inserted. The suggested retail for eight-card packs will be $1.50 each. These cards should be among the hottest this year

WildStorm Productions has another set on the horizon, WildStorm Gallery, due out in May. The series coincides with the "WildStorm Rising" nine-title crossover event occurring in the WS comics. Many of today's top artists—including Julie Bell, Bill Sienkiewicz, Ken Steacy, and Mark Texeira—are contributing to this 126-card fully painted series. There are 12 Famous Battles cards, with no insertion rate available; and a six-card most popular characters set, which will be chosen by retailers across the country a short while before the set is released

Chaos! Comics's publisher Brian Pulido recently let us know that that blood-lovin', violent character Evil Ernie will be getting his own card set this June The special, unique feature of this set is that all 100 cards will not only be Chromium (like the Lady Death set), but *Glow-in-the-Dark* Chromium—a card industry first Also, several guest artists will contribute work to this product, including *Catwoman*'s Jim Balent, *Lobo*'s Val Semeiks, and *Cry for Dawn*'s Joseph Michael Linsner. Pulido also notes that there will be five chase cards using state-of-the-art material, and plenty of surprises. We'll pass more info on this cool-sounding set by you as soon as we hear it.

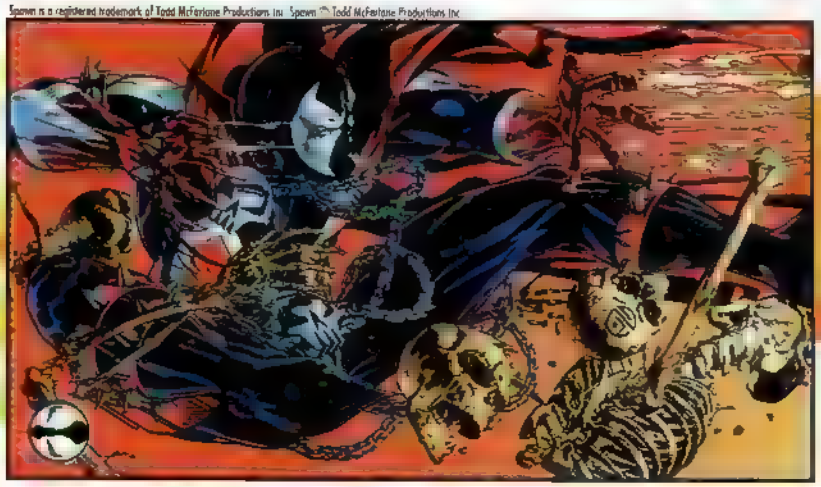
Meanwhile, Ernie's babelicious "friend," Lady Death, is busting out all over. Krome Productions's Lady Death card set, which hit the counters late last year, is one of the more popular releases among entertainment cards right now. Lady Death fits into the ever-popular, ever-expanding bad girl category, and was one of the first such characters to take off This All-Chromium series is selling for around $1.75 per pack right now

SkyBox is producing an all-encompassing Disney set based on the rich history of the company. Other similar sets, such as the Pepsi and Coca-Cola sets, have faired very well, due to the massive collector interest in memorabilia relating to the products. So both Disney collectors and card collectors will be hot for the set. This baby hits in June, and features the definitive retrospective of Mickey and the rest of the lovable cast. Watch out for a special SkyDisc, and a SkyMotion card, which shows about eight seconds of motion on one trading card. For those of you who have the *Star Trek* SkyMotion card, you know how incredibly cool this looks. We'll have more in-depth info available shortly

SkyBox has announced that June is also when we'll be seeing the first series of trading cards based on the TV series *Star Trek: Voyager*, the newest installment of the immensely popular *Star Trek* franchise The first series will basically be an introduction to the new cast, containing background info and the like. It will also contain alien descriptions and spaceships Again, there will be a SkyDisc and SkyMotion card. Full details on the set should be out by next month. You can look for the second series to blast off sometime in October or November of '95

As mentioned last month, Fleer is producing an Ultra set based on Steven Spielberg's upcoming *Casper* movie. Due out in May, eight-card packs will sell for $1 49 each The movie

Spawn is a registered trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions Inc Spawn © Todd McFarlane Productions Inc



The wait is over: Spawn's card set will be flying into stores this April, care of WildStorm Productions,

™ & © Brian Pulido

Lady Death and a pumpkin appear in Krome Productions's Evil Ernie card set.

is opening on Memorial Day weekend, which should mean a lot of seats filling up in the theaters—resulting in a heavy amount of fans filling up the hobby stores. There are 120 regular cards in all, plus 34 chase cards Chase cards will include Prismatic Foils, Spectre Blasts, and Holograms. Specifics on rate of insertion and how many cards per chase set were not available at press time. All artwork is coming from the movie itself (with no comic book artwork). The movie contains a blend of live-action and three-dimensional computer graphics animation produced by George Lucas's ILM (*Jurassic Park*), to show all the ghosts This should be a highly watchable product, folks.

Batman Metal by Fleer is not finalized yet, but more information has become available. The set will consist of approximately 135 cards and is loosely based on this summer's movie, *Batman Forever*, using DC Comics artists to portray the characters. Because SkyBox has a comic book contract with DC, only the characters that appear in *Batman Forever* will be used. All artwork will be original, and four chase sets—including Holograms and a parallel Silver Flashers set—will appear. More next time.

Comic Images will be producing an All-Chromium series of Bill Tucci's Shi trading cards, due out around August of this year. There will be some new, original artwork, as well as many pieces lifted from comic book art. Comic Images also plans to have several artists—most notably Olivia—create their own interpretations of Shi for a chase set. Considering the success of Lady Death and the success all the "Bad Girls" are having, this set should sell well. And hey, where's the Gen[13] set of lovely ladies?

Milk & Cheese trading cards will soon be a reality, courtesy of 21st Century Archives. Evan Dorkin's wild, uninhibited creation, which has a cult-like following in the comic book community, should be out sometime later this year. We'll keep you posted

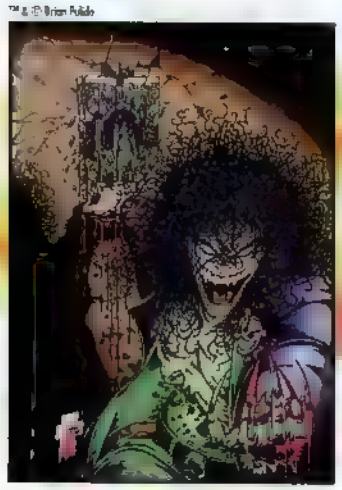
Fleer's Flair Marvel Annual '95 hasn't fared nearly as well as its predecessor. People had high hopes, but after last year's big success, this set seemed to rest on its laurels a bit too much The card design changed very little, as did the chase cards. The artwork itself, even though it was computer-generated, still looked too much like last year's set, and at four bucks a pack, it's not the house o' fire that them Flair cards are used to. Let's hope for a radical change next time around

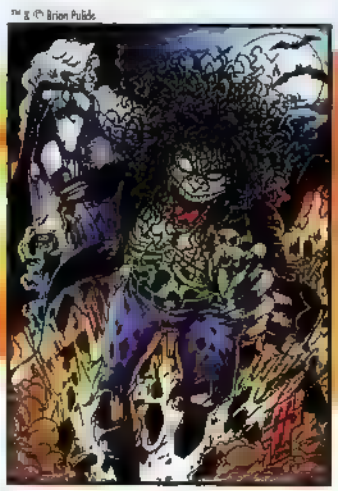
The *Star Trek* game cards by Decipher continue to be on the rise, with Limited Edition box prices fetching as much as $450 to $475 a box. Meanwhile, Unlimited Edition boxes can be had for around $70 to $90 a box The Data and Picard cards lead the way in terms of value and popularity, at a whopping $70 each. With gaming cards on the rise and a *Magic: The Gathering* Black Lotus card selling for $125 to $150 a pop, these *Star Trek* prices may actually seem cheap pretty soon.

Star Wars WideVision cards have been selling through at a great pace. Although the next three movies are scheduled for 1997, 1998, and 1999 releases, the *Star Wars* name still has some drawing power. The collation here is better than usual, especially for Topps, and it'll be interesting how huge the *Star Wars* memorabilia will be come movie time We'll just have to wait and see

Even though he's co-publisher of Collector's Sportslook, *Steven Shamus wears p.j.s with the feet on 'em.*

Another Wildstorm set heads your way in May





Evil Ernie, Lady Death's psycho pal, has his own card set to bloody up this June.

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We're also offering 8 X-Men 1st Day Covers, commemorating the date of initial issue of the stamps in Mongolia.

What's more, this is just the first in a series of authentic Marvel stamp collections coming from Comic Images. No wonder the professor approves!

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APRIL '95

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Created by Comic Legend Neil Gaiman

Issue #1 May 95
Featuring Flip Cover Artwork by Bill Sienkiewicz & Dan Brereton

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COMIC watch

ACTION COMICS ™ & © DC Comics

Action Comics #1

Writers: *Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster*
Artist: *Joe Shuster*
Publisher: *DC Comics*
Release date: *June 1938*
Current value, in Near Mint condition: $125,000

"You will believe a man can fly." C'mon, you know you've heard it somewhere (though for the life of us, we can't remember where the phrase is from). Anyway, after reading *Action Comics* #1, a really cool comic, you'll most definitely become a true believer. It stars the sole survivor of the planet Krypton, Superman, in a nifty high-flying adventure. This guy, who wears blue tights and a red cape, can see through things, has heat vision, and as you guessed, pretty much can fly (or at least leap really, really high). Good thing he's on the side of good, or we'd all be in for some serious trouble. Now, what makes this particular issue one to watch is the fact that Superman seems to be getting pretty popular with the kiddies these days, and this here issue houses his first appearance. The Kryptonian is getting hot so fast, in fact, that he's actually going to be getting another regular title soon, the quarterly *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow*. Anyway, in *Action* #1, not only do you meet Superman, but ya get to see that stylin' babe Lois Lane. Boy, is she ever a knockout! So, if you want some serious ass-kickin' fun, pick up a copy of *Action Comics* #1. Issues seem to be gettin' pretty scarce, though, so you'd better grab 'em fast. You might wanna start lookin' in those bargain bins now, before prices on this bad boy start going through the roof. You can't go wrong with *Action* #1! ☆

good & cheap

by Mike Searle

THE ADVENTURES OF KOOL-AID MAN ™ & © General Foods Corp

The Adventures of Kool-Aid Man

Writer: *Jim Salicrup*
Artists: *Dan DeCarlo & Joe Giella*
Current Lack of Value: *10-for-a buck bin*

Oh, yeaahh! The search is finally over. This is one of those beauties that's lost in the back issue bins until the true bargain hunter snorfs it up. With more action than a superhero wedding issue, more pages (36!) than ye old "King-Size Annuals," a stunning cover by John Romita Sr., and the unbridled talents of Jim Salicrup and Dan DeCarlo, *The Adventures of Kool-Aid Man* is better than a whole gallon of the sweet red stuff itself when you're just 30 seconds shy of heat exhaustion.

I mean, where else can you get so much for your money? Ya get two—count 'em, two!—action-packed stories like "The Thirsties Strike Out!" and "Thirst in Space." There's a particularly practical "How to Build your own Kool-Aid Drink Stand" help guide, and a whole slew of mind-boggling puzzles and super ads. Plus, you'll see the Koolster (in his coolest costume to date) at his finest, slinging one-line zingers at the villains faster than Spidey on even his best day.

All in all, we're talking *extra*-special here. Reserve a vacuum pack now or you're gonna regret it years down the line! ☆

PICKS
FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS, AS SELECTED BY THE *WIZARD* STAFF, SHIPPING IN APRIL!

X-Men: Omega

Writers: ***Scott Lobdell, Fabian Nicieza, & Mark Waid***
Artist: ***Roger Cruz***
Release Date: ***April***
Cover Price: ***$3.95***

MARVEL The moment that X-fans have been waiting for has finally arrived. *X-Men: Omega* presents the climax to the four-month-long scenario unleashed during "After Xavier: The Age of Apocalypse," which envisions a world where Professor X is killed before he can create his X-Men team. "All the loose ends will come together here," says Mark Waid, who is dialoguing the story. "And since I've only seen the pages for the first half of the book so far, even I have some doubts about how successful the X-Men are going to be at getting out of this one."

Shipping with a chromium cover, this 48-page issue provides the wrap-up to all the storylines running through the ongoing X-books, which changed their names and numbering to indicate just how apocalyptic this whole adventure is. Now the X-gang comes together to confront Apocalypse and his band of no-goods as the Human High Council prepares to drop its bomb and defeat the Mutants. Can our heroes find a way out of their alternative future and back to normality? Will they restore Professor Xavier to his rightful position and put this nightmare behind them?

Not entirely, Waid hints. "There definitely will be some elements that carry over to the regular books," he says. But he remains tight-lipped as to whether those will include characters, plot elements, or those snazzy costumes. "This is not a complete *What If?* story," he stresses. "There will be some repercussions to the reality we know. The door is being left open." How that ultimately impacts the storyline will depend on a number of factors still being worked out, he says. But it's possible that "The Age of Apocalypse" will reverberate through the X-universe for some time to come. —Craig Shutt

X-Men ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Ghost #1

GHOST ™ & © Dark Horse Comics

Writer: *Eric Luke*
Artists: *Adam Hughes & Mark Farmer*
Release Date: *April*
Cover Price: *$2.50*

DARK HORSE "It's a babe book," admits editor Michael Eury about the new ongoing series starring the wispy woman with the blazing automatics. "We're very much aware of that. But it's a lot more. People who want a solidly crafted story will like it, too. This book can attract just about everybody out there, because it's got everything."

One thing it has is Adam Hughes, who returns to regular art chores here, much to the delight of his many fans. Hughes will be penciling three-issue story arcs separated by one-issue stand-alone stories by the art team from last summer's *Ghost Special*: Matt Haley and Tom Simmons. Hughes will remain at least through issue #15 and probably longer, Eury says. "He really loves the character."

Ghost has many questions about her past, and the answers will come early and often, Eury promises. In the first issue, we learn more about her sister, and by issue #3, many secrets will be uncovered. Other members of the Dark Horse Heroes line of titles (formerly called Comics' Greatest World) will appear, too. Right off the bat comes King Tiger, who visits in #2 and #3 and tells Ghost more than she wants to know about her teleporting powers. Then Barb Wire stops by in #4 to flaunt her new buffed-up look, rocketing up the babelicious level even higher. —CS

Rune/Silver Surfer #1

Writers: *Chris Ulm & Glenn Herdling*
Artists: *Henry Flint & John Buscema*
Release Date: *April*
Cover Price: *$5.95 ($2.95 standard ed.)*

MARVEL/MALIBU The new partnership between the Ultraverse and the Marvel Universe pays dividends this month when Rune breaks on through to the other side. "Readers will see the differences between the two universes' physical structures," says Chris Ulm. "This is a stand-alone story, but it also will be setting the stage for some very major changes in the Ultraverse that also will affect the Marvel Universe."

The plot centers on Rune's discovery of Adam Warlock's Infinity gems—particularly the soul gem—and the Surfer's bid to stop him. "We're going to explore what would happen if a UV character got hold of the power to transform all of reality in the Marvel Universe," Ulm explains. "It's going to open up a lot of possibilities." Rune will also meet a key Marvel villain, whose identity remains a secret. (Rats.)

Featuring flip covers by Barry Windsor-Smith and John Buscema, the story begins on Rune's side of the book and continues on the Silver Surfer's side. "We like the flip books, because they offer a little bit extra," Ulm says. The story also links with Loki's *Godwheel* appearance, kicking off a series of planned crossovers. "They won't just happen," Ulm stresses. "They will be worked into continuity and continue our approach of having a planned, concrete story concept for each event." —CS

Silver Surfer ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Rune ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

Star Wars: Droids #1

STAR WARS: DROIDS ™ & © Lucasfilm Ltd.

Writer: ***Ryder Windham***
Artist: ***Ian Gibson***
Release Date: ***April***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

DARK HORSE If you liked the previous *Droids* mini-series, then you won't want to miss the first issue of the new ongoing series, promises editor Peet Janes. "The previous stories were aimed at a more youthful audience," he explains. "This series will still be a lot of fun, but it has a bit more bite to it." That's because writer Ryder Windham has "a strong sense of the mystery thriller in his writing," Janes adds. Complementing that effort will be Ian Gibson, best known for his work on the futuristic British comic *2000 AD*.

The story picks up where the mini-series ended, with our two adroit droids, See-Threepio and Artoo Detoo, deputized and ready for action. They wind up tracking a villainous con man to the smugglers' planet Nar Shaddaa, where the fan club for droid deputies doesn't have many members. That doesn't faze our pals, however, who use their wits, gather their resources, and wind up leading a droid rebellion before the story arc's conclusion!

This first four-issue arc will be followed by other creative teams, using a format similar to DC's *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*—only in this case, each story picks up where the last one left off. Janes explains that the series keeps its own continuity, but is still timeless, outside the adventures the droids had with Luke Skywalker. —CS

Justice League America #100

Writer: ***Gerard Jones***
Artists: ***Chuck Wojtkiewicz & Bob Dvorak***
Release Date: ***April***
Cover Price: ***$3.95 ($2.95 standard ed.)***

DC COMICS This jam-packed anniversary ish has everything from a thunderous battle with the maniacal Lord Havok, to the League opening its satellite "doors" (yes, they're back in a satellite HQ—this time, one with a history and much coolness) to all of the world's heroes. Writer Gerard Jones says, "This issue features the current JLA, plus the members of *Extreme Justice*. What we want to get across with this issue is that the JLA, hypothetically, can include any hero in the DC Universe. It'll be a drop-in-when-you-feel-like-it kind of team. In #100, there are cameos by Superboy, Green Lantern, and a bunch of others." You'll be seeing a veritable ton of DC heroes run through *JLA* in the coming year. According to Jones, this issue's villain, Lord Havok, happens to be a revamped member of the Extremists, and is working with the electronic entity Kilg%re, an old Flash villain, to destroy the League. Meanwhile, the mystery surrounding Power Girl's rapidly aging child begins to unravel, leading up to #103's major revelation. "Also, a lot of changes occur with the character Ice Maiden," Jones notes, referring to the deceased Ice's replacement, who was actually the first Ice Maiden in the international super-team, the Global Guardians. "We're also revealing more secrets about their space station refuge—there's much more to it than the Leaguers know about." There's also a holographic foil-enhanced cover for you folks who want to throw in an extra buck, and a surprise at the story's end for everyone! —Marc Wilkofsky

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA ™ & © DC Comics

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in April, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff. Books marked with a check ✓ sign are comics that should not be overlooked on the often-cramped comic shelf.

Agents of Law #2

DARK HORSE Law continues to lead the people of Golden City, but there are those who don't seem to trust him too much, including Mecha. That hard-hittin' armored guy pounds his way into this issue to get the skinny on Law. Also, the truth behind Law's power is revealed (It's those damn Energizer batteries again!) By Keith Giffen, Lovern Kindzierski, Dan Lawlis, and Ian Akin. **$2.50**

Aquaman #9

DC COMICS Well give that man a hand! Whoo-hah! That's exactly what Aquaman does this issue, when he visits the infamous S.T.A.R. Labs to add a few little gimmicks to his harpoon hand While that's goin' on, the fish guy's son, Koryak, visits Atlantis (no doubt in an attempt to score with the "Do you know who my dad is?" line). By Peter David, Joe St. Pierre, and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

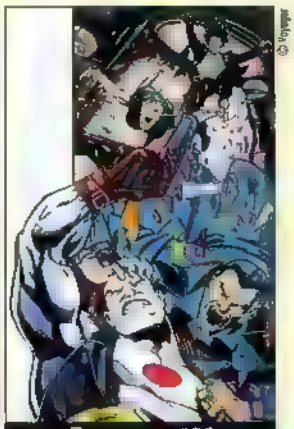
Badrock #2

IMAGE The Savage Dragon lends Badrock a hand with finding the 'Rock's dad. But what they find is the big fat bastard known as Girth. Smells like pork rinds and a fight to me. By Rob Liefeld and Eric Stephenson. **$1.75**

✓ The Batman Adventures #32

DC COMICS Holy Napoleonic Nightmares, Batman! It seems Gotham City's been taken over by a bunch of crooks dressed up like that fiend Napoleon! Are they truly insane or just plain loopy? Penciler Mike Parobeck says, "It's a story about two older men who are big combatants. They hate each other, and they decide to use all their money to buy all the hoods of Gotham to fight their battles for them. They like the old-style of fighting, the old Napoleonic war style. But of course, Batman stops them." Also, for another outstanding Bat-tale, check out *The Batman Adventures Annual* #2. Ra's Al Ghul (that scoundrel!) decides to turn Gotham City into a living Hell, when he sets Etrigan loose upon the world

© DC Comics
Batman #519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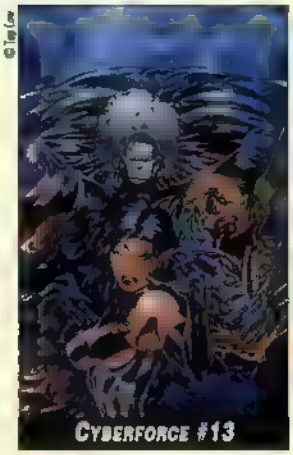
Bloodshot #32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Cyberforce #13

© DC Comics
Green Lantern #63

Gone, gone, o form of man, rise again a wedge o' Spam! **$1.75—*BATMAN ADVENTURES*; $3.50—*ANNUAL* #2**

Batman Books

DC COMICS In *Batman* #519, ol' pointy ears tries to second-guess the Black Spider before he goes and kills somebody again. Bats better act fast, though, or all-out gang warfare's gonna explode throughout Gotham! Over in *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #39, while Batman's on the case of some missing tourists, Solomon Grundy—the Undertaker lookalike (WWF reference!)—has been spotted in the area. Grunt over to *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #72 for "Werewolf," Part 2 (of 3). Batman barely escapes from the vicious bite (and breath) of the werewolf, only to stumble upon a cult of werewolf worshippers. Prowl down to *Detective Comics* #686, where King Snake and Lynx are dukin' it out to see who will rule Gotham's underworld. And better yet, Robin's gotta save King Snake. **$1.95 EACH**

Bloodshot #32-#33

ACCLAIM COMICS Y'know, if you replace the words "love shack" with Bloodshot in the B-52s' song "Love Shack," it keeps with the beat. Anyway, these issues see our boy Bloodshot duke it out with some vampires. Should be cool. By Kevin VanHook and Sean Chen **$2.25 EACH**

✓ Bone #19

CARTOON BOOKS The bet between Phoney Bone and Lucius tightens up, thanks to the cheers for Phoney Bone, the Dragon Slayer. Dragon Slayer? What the? If that Jeff Smith guy bumped off our friend the Red Dragon, the fur's gonna be flyin' Then again, this could be one o' them schemes o' Phoney's, just like the Great Cow Race Hmm. By Jeff Smith **$2.95**

Cyberforce #13

IMAGE Cyberdata's just a wee bit ticked off at Cyberforce, since they've found some artifacts that can reveal Cyberdata's origin. Meanwhile, T.I.M.M.I.E. goes nuts and causes all sorts o' problems for Velocity and Chip. Plus, Darkness falls this issue. Well, gee. That's real exciting. That happens like every day around 6 p.m. What's the big deal? By Eric and Marc Silvestri. **$2.25**

MORE PICKS

Grendel Tales: Devil's Choices #2

Jonah Hex: ROTWAS #4

© DC Comics

Flash #102
DC COMICS The Flash's new powers are pushed to their limit when Mongul comes to town. Now, how does a super-speedster take on Mongul? C'mon, the guy helped destroy an entire city without even breakin' a sweat. And he's got a big melon for a noggin! By Mark Waid, Michael Jon Friedman, Oscar Jimenez, and Jose Marzan Jr. **$1.75**

Glory #2
IMAGE Glory's demonic father (Hey, doesn't everyone have one o' them?) is threatening her very existence. Now it's up to Glory to face the music and her past in order to survive. Guess she's not a daddy's little girl. By Jo Duffy and Mike Deodato Jr. **$2.50**

✓ Green Lantern #63
DC COMICS "The Resurrection of Hal Jordan," Part 1 (of 2). If that title doesn't clue you in, then wake up and smell the humus. Parallax returns and bumps into Ganthet and Kyle (ouch!). Guest stars galore, as Ganthet calls in Flash, Green Arrow, Black Canary, and more to keep Parallax at bay. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, and Romeo Tanghal. Marz says, "Hal finally confronts Kyle, and wants his ring back. And as usually happens in these funny books, they set to fightin'! At the end of this two-part story, there'll be a new status quo for Hal. We wanted to set him up so the readers could plug in and know where he is and what he's doing. And hopefully know why he's doing it. You know, sympathize with him a bit." **$1.75**

Grendel Tales: Devil's Choices #2 (of 4)
DARK HORSE While Goran gets closer to the babelicious warrior woman named Marcia, the Reconquista Army tries to take the Agram territory for the Grendel-Kahn. Boma is rescued and sent in to help with the invasion, but will he be able to abandon his wife and kid in the name of battle? Written by Darko Macan, drawn by Edvin Biukovic, and colored by Matthew Hollingsworth. **$2.95**

Icon #26
MILESTONE/DC Y'know, these Milestone titles are really pretty neat. You should give 'em a try sometime. Anyway, this issue, the new Rocket lies defeated at the feet of Oblivion, which means that Raquel, the former Rocket, has gotta come out o' retirement in order to save some butt. By Dwayne McDuffie, M.D Bright, and Mike Gustovich. **$1.75**

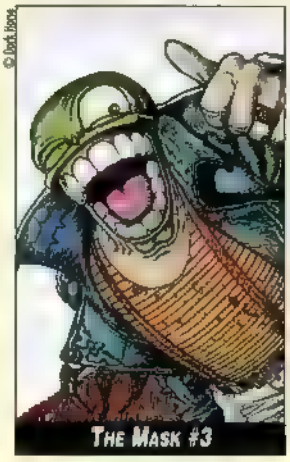
Incredible Hulk #430
MARVEL The Hulkster brings a victim's murderer to the victim's father. But ol' Green Jeans—oh wait, that's the guy from *Captain Kangaroo*—ol' Purple Pants finds out, the hard way, that the victim's father is really the nutty Speedfreek! Needless to say, chaos ensues. By Peter David, Liam Sharp, and Robin Riggs. **$1.95**

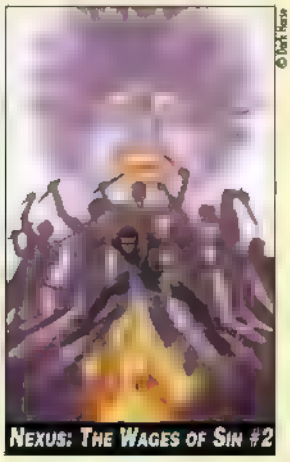
Jonah Hex: Riders of the Worm & Such #4 (of 5)
VERTIGO/DC Meet Jonny and Edgar, the Autumn Brothers. Sounds like a bunch of nice fellows, right? WRONG! They're half-man, half-worm, and totally disgusting! (An' believe us—we know disgusting when we see it.) They're also out to kill Hex, but Mr. Scarface and his band of singing cowboys are going straight for the Queen worm instead! By Joe R. Lansdale, Timothy Truman, and Sam Glanzman. **$2.95**

The Mask #3
DARK HORSE "The Mask Strikes Back," Part 3 (of 5). The credibility of the mask comes into question, as the members of the Big-Head gang keep getting into trouble, thanks to Big-Head himself. Also, the mask gets a facelift as it switches hosts, and Big-Head bumps noggins with that Walter twerp. By John Arcudi and Doug Mahnke. **$2.50**

Nexus: The Wages of Sin #2 (of 4)
DARK HORSE Telepath Rupert Munson, the most dangerous man in the universe, is locked away in a cold, desolate cell. His only companion, a vid unit. Now, Munson somehow gets out, and no one (except for a certain assassin called Nexus) has any clue to where he's gone. By Mike Baron, Steve "The Dude" Rude, and Gary Martin. **$2.95**

✓ Outsiders #19
DC COMICS "Sins of the Father," Part 2 (of 2). It's time to play "Catch that Soul." The Outsiders pull out all the stops to save Faust's soul from his father Felix Faust. But then there's this whole traitor thing, and there's a certain team member who pretty much bites it and will never return. Now, where have we heard that before? By Mike Barr, Paul Pelletier, and Robert Campanella


The Mask #3


Nexus: The Wages of Sin #2

© Dark Horse

MORE PICKS

Barr says, "To some extent, this issue will help determine the future of the Outsiders, because their membership is [drastically] affected. I think #18 and #19 work together as the kind of thing I like to do with the Outsiders, in the sense that it's a very old-fashioned DC adventure story, and yet at the same time, it's very much a modern comics story as well." **$2.25**

PITT #9

IMAGE Today on *Geraldo*: Big, hulking, no-nosed freaks who are reunited with long-lost, big-eyed little boys. Now that the Arctic struggle for power has come to an end, Pitt and Timmie are finally brought together again. By Brian Holton and Dale Keown **$1.95**

PRIME #21

MALIBU Hmmm, seems the whole "Rafferty Saga" was another *Highlander* sequel! Now that Prime's lost his head, literally, Kevin is trapped inside Prime's body. For obvious reasons, the rest of the world believes that Prime is dead. Silly humans. By Gerard Jones, Len Strazewski, Joe Staton, and Jeff Whiting **$2.50**

PROPHET #2

IMAGE Prophet's pretty steamed, 'cause he just discovered that his whole life's been a lie. (Hey, no problem. Just get Barry Windsor-Smith to write a multi-part origin story for him in *Marvel Comics Presents*. That'll clear things up.) He spends this issue trying to piece together the truth By Chuck Dixon and Stephen Platt. **$2.50**

RIPCLAW #2 (OF 4)

IMAGE The physical and spirit worlds begin to merge, as the demon gets his grubby paws on more of those sacred stones. It don't look good for the Ripster, who gets help from Cyblade and Heatwave By Eric Silvestri, Brandon Peterson, and Al Vey. **$2.50**

ROBIN #17

DC COMICS Robin's caught between a rock and a hard place, or more specifically a King Snake and a Lynx, as they duke it out for control of that seedy underworld Also, meet the assassin Silver Monkey. (Silver Monkey? *Silver Monkey?* Oy vey.) By Chuck Dixon, Steve Lieber, and Scott Hanna **$1.95**

SAVAGE DRAGON #19

IMAGE The Dragon takes care of the Fiend, in what looks to be the bloodiest li'l tale yet. Which is definitely saying something By Erik Larsen **$2.50**

SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #47

ACCLAIM COMICS "Brave New World," Part 2 (of 5). Solar continues his Hal Jordan tribute by recreating a universe to make up for the one he kind of piffed. Hey, that's more than most universe destroyers do By Dan Jurgens and Dick Giordano **$2.50**

SPAWN #31

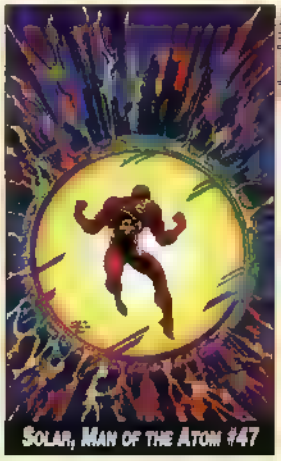
IMAGE In this extra-special ish, not only will Al Simmons fight the Redeemer, formerly called the Anti-Spawn, but Spawn will receive a newly redesigned costume. Spawn also faces a turning point in his life, both physically and mentally—look out, Spawnie! By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. **$1.95**

THE SPECTRE #30

DC COMICS It's a battle to rock the very cosmos itself. The Spectre and Azmodus get it on one last time throughout all space, time, Heaven, Hell, and Jersey! Now that's some battle! By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake **$2.25**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

MARVEL The fun starts this month in *Web of Spider-Man* #125. The original Gwen Stacy clone returns with a whole load o' secrets and stuff. Then over in *Amazing Spider-Man* #402, Pete and Mary Jane try to deal with the shocking truth about their unborn baby (It's really the Beyonder!). Also, Judas Traveller offers Webhead the chance to save Aunt May's soul. Now why would he do that unless she was actually dead.. ohhhh, I get it. Swing on by *Spider-Man* #59 to see the Traveller and the Host (Alex Trebek?) increase their offer, by helping Spidey get rid of the Jackal, the Scarlet Spider, and Kaine, whether he wants to or not. Also, Ben Reilly starts doin' time! Clone yourself, and have your clone read *Spectacular Spider-Man* #225 for the introduction to the brand-spankin'-new Green Goblin (five bucks says it's Ned Leeds's clone). Also, Mary Jane's unborn li'l tyke grows an extra head or something like that. And finally, wrap



MORE PICKS

up your spiderific month with *Amazing Spider-Man Super Size Special* #1. This life-size comic requires four people just to turn the pages! This issue features Part 1 (of 5) of "Planet of the Symbiotes," where Spidey and Venom take off for the symbiote's homeworld in order to stop a bunch o' aliens bent on taking over Earth. ***WEB OF, SPECTACULAR*—$3.95 EACH (SPECIAL EDITIONS), $2.95 (REGULAR EDITIONS); *SUPER SIZE SPECIAL*—$3.95; *AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*—$1.50; *SPIDER-MAN*—$1.95**

Star Wars: Dark Empire II #5 (of 6)

DARK HORSE In order to escape from Boba Fett (hey, you can't do that), Han Solo's gotta pep up the ol' Falcon with a bunch of antique weapons. Also, Lando Calrissian's war droids go up against some pretty gruesome creatures, while Lando gets tanked on some Colt 45. By Tom Veitch and Cam Kennedy. **$2.95**

✓ Stray Bullets #2

EL CAPITÁN With a title like *Stray Bullets*, you just know there's gonna be some violence. And when too much violence affects seven-year-old Virginia Applejack, she goes insane. This issue also introduces Spanish Scott and gets rid of Georgie, Manny, and Louie. By David Lapham. And don't even think about reading this puppy unless you're one o' them mature reader types. **$2.95**

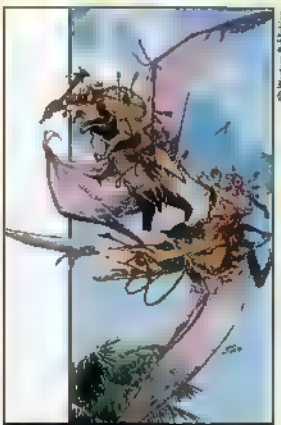
✓ Superboy #16

DC COMICS It's THE issue of the year. The mighty Krypto is finally released from quarantine. The first thing he does is mount a leg and go to town! Oh yeah, Superboy is also duped into fighting Loose Cannon, after Rex puts out word to do away with Superboy. By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. Kesel states, "It's Superboy's first day of school. There's a lot of real good character stuff that's happening in that issue, as well as some good action stuff. Tom's done a knockout cover. And we start to pick up even more speed in this issue towards a real big event that we're planning for issue #25. I know that's a little bit away, but we're setting pieces in place even now." **$1.95**

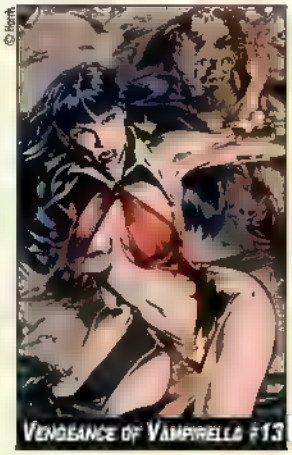
Superman Books

DC COMICS The Kryptonian fun starts this month in *Action Comics* #710, with "The Death of Clark Kent," Part 3 (of 7). The Big S books on back to Metropolis to protect Lois from that snake who knows that Supes is Clark Kent. But just as he gets there, a bomb goes off, and Supes is far from happy. For Part 4, fly on over to *Superman: The Man of Steel* #45, where the man known as Clark Kent is no longer among the living. Superman goes into hiding just to protect his loved ones. *Superman* #101 features Part 5. Both Superman and Clark Kent are nowhere to be found, and danger surrounds Lois and the Kents with every move they make. Check out *Adventures of Superman* #524 for the penultimate chapter in "The Death of Clark Kent." Superman finally discovers who the fiend responsible for his suffering is, and he's not happy about it! **$1.95 EACH**

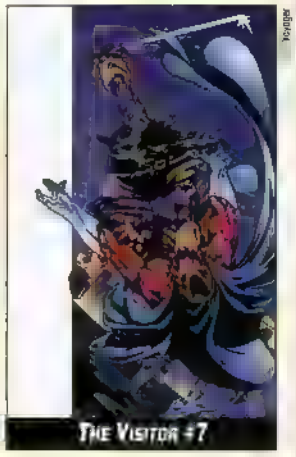
Star Wars: Dark Empire II #5



Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #27



Vengeance of Vampirella #13



The Visitor #7

Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #27-#28

ACCLAIM COMICS Turok finishes his stint in the Lost Land with Chichak and Captain Red. Then he's off to give the DEA a hand in tracking down a T-Rex gone astray. By Tim Truman, Rags Morales, and Ken Branch. **$2.50 EACH**

Turok, Dinosaur Hunter/Shaman's Tears #1 (of 3)

ACCLAIM COMICS Turok and Joshua Brand team up to fight the suspicious White Buffalo Warriors. But who are they and what are they up to? Wouldn't it be great if Mike Grell's Jon Sable jumped in and blew the hell out of Turok and Brand? He could do it, too, y'know. By Mike Grell and S. Clarke Hawbaker. **$2.50**

Tyrant #4

SPIDERBABY GRAFIX Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday, dear giant lizard of destruction, happy birthday to you. Read about the baby T-Rex's very first day of life. Unfortunately, it's not a kind one. Now that the birth's taken place, you can bet there's gonna be plenty o' action around this title! By Stephen R. Bissette. **$2.95**

✓ UltraForce #7

MALIBU Speaking to the dead can be a real curse, especially when one of your teammates just died. That's just what Ghoul goes through this issue, following his team's battle with Atalon. There's also a whole load of suicides being committed across the country

MORE PICKS

By Chris Ulm, Hank Kanalz, and Steve Erwin. Ulm says of the ish, "It's about a rock star that people think has committed suicide, and because he was an ultra, he had such power over his followers that they start killing themselves off one by one. And so, it's up to Ghoul to figure out what's happening, and he believes that it was really a murder, not a suicide. It's a rather grim story with a twist. It's definitely a Ghoul-ish story." (Groan.) **$2.50**

Vengeance of Vampirella #13

HARRIS Vampi helps the Salem police hunt down that beautiful, but dangerous, killer known as Passion. Isn't that all she's been doing lately? Well, the whole thing concludes in this here issue. By Tom Sniegoski, Kirk Van Wormer, and Joe Weems. **$2.95**

Visitor #6-#7

ACCLAIM COMICS The Visitor must contend with a bunch of UFOs and men in black. Hmm. ..seeing as how that was all the info available on these two issues, d'ya think there's something going on that we should know about? I smell a conspiracy! By Kevin VanHook, John Ross, and Mike DeCarlo **$2.50**

✓ WildC.A.T.s #19

IMAGE The WildC.A.T.s apparently blow it again—or things're blown for them. Right when they have Highlower exactly where they want him, the Coda attacks a fancy Washington D.C. restaurant. (At least they're in a nice place when it happens.) Also, Savant goes to D.C. on a trip that may just end up saving the WildC.A.T.s. By James Robinson and Travis Charest. Robinson says, "The time I spent on *WildC.A.T.s* is sort of a guilty pleasure, because I really do enjoy the larger-than-life element. It isn't something I often get a chance to do. With this issue, I was trying to hearken back to those old *S.H.I.E.L.D.s* with the barber shops and the Hydra bases—the secret spy stuff. So that's sort of why there's a sort of surreal element to the restaurant being the Coda base." **$2.50**

✓ X #14

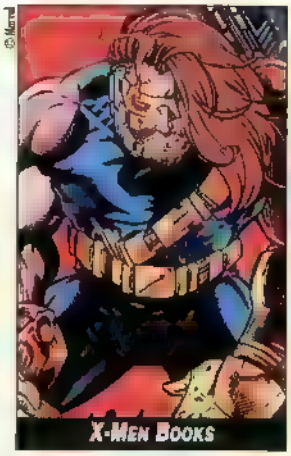
DARK HORSE It's the penultimate chapter to "The War for Arcadia." But who reigns supreme at the end of the war? Hmm...it could be Gamble, Coffin, Lord Alamout, or X. Hey, wait a sec, didn't X die last issue? Just what the heck's going on around here? Well, this issue holds the answers to many of these questions, and most likely brings up a bunch of new ones. By Steven Grant and Javier Saltares. **$2.50**

© Marvel

Web of Spider-Man #125

© Dark Horse

X #14



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X-Men Books

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X-O Manowar #47

The X-Files #4

TOPPS "Firebird," Part 1 (of 3). A modern-looking human skull is found and dated to be three million years old! Mulder and Scully discover that it belongs to a scientist from 1950, who was part of an investigation in Siberia. Now, a creature related to the whole thing is awake, and draining the planet of atomic energy. By Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard **$2.50**

X-Men books

MARVEL Oh, no! Over in *The Mutants. The Astonishing X-Men* #4, Chuck and Magneto have been kidnapped! And where are the rest of the Mutants during all o' this? Why, Rogue's team is off battling Beast's Infinites. Over in *The Mutants. The Amazing X-Men* #4, the X-Men get back together in order to storm Apocalypse's Citadel and save Magneto, Bishop, and that Xavier guy. Tune in next month to see how the heck all these mutant freaks get shoved back into normal continuity. And if it starts off with Wolverine waking up and taking a shower, there're gonna be a lot of really pissed-off people! (Everyone knows Wolverine doesn't take showers!) **$1.95 EACH**

✓ X-O Manowar #46-#47

ACCLAIM COMICS "Ho! Good skin, what's that you're saying? How do you keep an idiot in suspense? Hmmm.. that's a good one. I don't know. Tell me, Good Skin. Good Skin? You am making Aric mad, Good Skin. Good Skin?!?" Anyway, the battle between X-O and Crescendo reaches its high-flyin', butt-kickin', fruit roll-upped conclusion. By Ron Marz, Andy Smith, and Ray Kryssing. Marz says of the issue, "These two issues are the conclusion of the first story arc in which we're trying to introduce X-O to new readers. We're setting up X-O so that at the end of issue #47, we have a character that we want to deal with. Hopefully, he'll be more interesting and appealing at the end of the story arc than he has been in the past, because we're shaking up his life. Nothing is gonna be the same by the end of issue #47." **$2.50 EACH**

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

...WE'D LIKE TO SEE DEAD!!!!!

1. AUNT MAY

Yeah, we know she was involved in that whole death thing over in *Amazing Spider-Man #400*, but Aunt May's had it coming for years. The old bat's been through like 60 heart attacks, 45 strokes, and had a fling with Doc Ock and the Vulture (Can you picture swapping spit with a guy named Otto? That can't be healthy). And what the hell are wheat cakes? She's been makin' the damn things and stuffin'em down Spidey's throat non-stop for thirty years now. She's like a Terminator—she absolutely will not stop until you are fed! And how can she not know Petey is Spidey? Nobody is that stupid. So, c'mon already, off her for good. Or off her clone and have the real Aunt May show up as Scarlet May. Just do something that involves chuckin' dirt on her.

2. WARRIOR

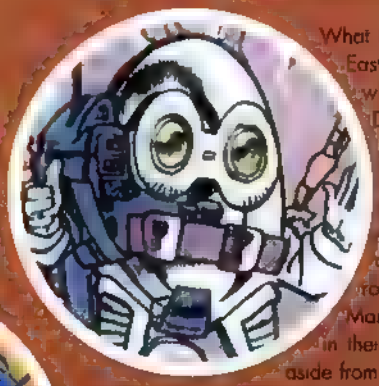
Warrior? *Warrior?!?* What the hell happened to Guy Gardner? Geez, you stop reading *J. L. Whatever* for a couple of years, and boom, it all goes to hell. So what happened? Guy Gardner used to be this character that you loved to hate. He was so obnoxious, and full of himself—it was great! He had some of the best moments in comics: Batman punching him in the nose, his raucous battles with Lobo, his hilarious dates with Ice—man, it was great. Anyway, now that's he's the big 'roid-head armor-shape-changing big gun guy, he bites. C'mon, what was once a great, unique, emotion-evoking character is now just another guy who beats people up. Double pee-yew on this guy, seeing as how he used to be a neat character.

3. JASON TODD

Yes! This one's *already* dead! Wa-hooo! Yes sir, Robin II, Jason Todd, was one of the most annoying characters to ever soil the comics page. So annoying, in fact, that he made this here list cause we'd like to off him again! So, how did the boy not-so-wonder croak? It was great. Y'see, in *Batman #427*, the Joker beat Jason unconscious with a crowbar (so much so, in fact, that the Joker's white gloves were red with blood afterwards. God, I love detail), then left him, along with his mother and a bomb, in a warehouse, and just as Batman showed up, *kaplooey!!*, big explosion. The kicker here though was that at the end of this ish, DC printed a phone number which fans could call, to decide if the explosion was lethal or not. Three cheers for fandom for offing the title bastard.

4. NANNY

What the hell is this? A Paas Easter egg gone bad? So what freakin' Silver Age DC book did we pull this winner out of? Sorry, but this here gem of a character is an X-Men villain, and, along with her big robot companion Orphan Maker, was quite the burr in their britches. So anyway, aside from just looking lamer than the worst Legion of Super-Heroes member, Nanny had some really cool superpowers—like standing there, pointing, and doing stuff. But what a cool action figure it (she?) would make! C'mon, look at all them neat belts and stuff. You could have Commando Nanny, Deep-Sea Nanny, and How Far Can I Throw This Piece of Crap Nanny. Sure-fire collectibles.



Aunt May & Nanny ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Warrior & Jason Todd ™ & © DC Comics.

5. JACK FLAG

Jack Ass is more like it. Where do these guys come from? He's like some bad guest star from the *Super Friends* cartoon. Anywho, this Captain America supporting character is one of the worst of the bunch. First off, lame origin (gets punched into a shelf full of chemicals, then finds himself possessed of super-powers. Retro '70s storytelling at its best). Plus, he's got red, white, and blue hair. It didn't look good when Cyndi Lauper used to do it, and it don't look any better now. And, most importantly, he's got this keen boom box he carries around on his shoulder that can shoot laser beams (and make orange sherbet!). I'd give 10 bucks to point that badboy at his noggin and press play.

6. MAGNUS'S KID

Remember the good ol' days when *Magnus, Robot Fighter* had a point? Boy, those were the days. Anyway, what we have here is a mistake on a grand scale, culminating with the birth of this li'l ponytail-wearin' weasel. Here's what happened: *Magnus, Robot Fighter*, having begun its slide into the pits of comic despair (pretty full pit these days), had this big blow-out Malev War storyline, which bit ass and really screwed up the book. Then, apparently after they realized how much it bit, Valiant ended the war, jumped ahead like 16 years, and gave us President Magnus, his wife Leeja, and their rebel-without-a-cause son Torque. The only thing that stayed the same? The quality of the story. Yeech.

7. TROLL

Hey, looks like all that coffee has finally stunted Wolverine's growth. Poor li'l guy, now he'll never score with Jean Grey. Everybody knows that short people never get any. Oh, wait a minute, this is that Puck guy. Boy, does this guy suck. What kind of superhero is a midget with a big P on his chest? The only team that would take this guy as a member would be Alpha Flight. That whole *team* should be on this list. We should... what? Who? Troll? Oh. Uh, we don't know anything about this guy, so we'll just jump ahead to number eight.

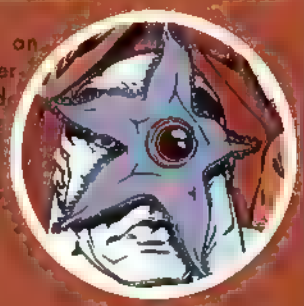
8. THE INFINITY WAR DOPPLEGANGERS

Ughh. *The Infinity Gauntlet* rulez, but its sequel, *The Infinity War*, was one of the worst series on the planet (and we won't even go into *The Infinity Crusade* shudder). Y'see, instead of coming up with some neat new characters for the heroes to fight, or some new stories involving some existing supervillains (or some seldom-seen supervillains), we were treated to evil, twisted versions of our heroes. Again. How many times is this trick gonna be used? And why did some of these buggers, like the Spider-Man double (now dubbed The Doppleganger), stick around? Not enough Spidey clones already? One more example of milking the cow bone-dry.

9. HERO ZERO

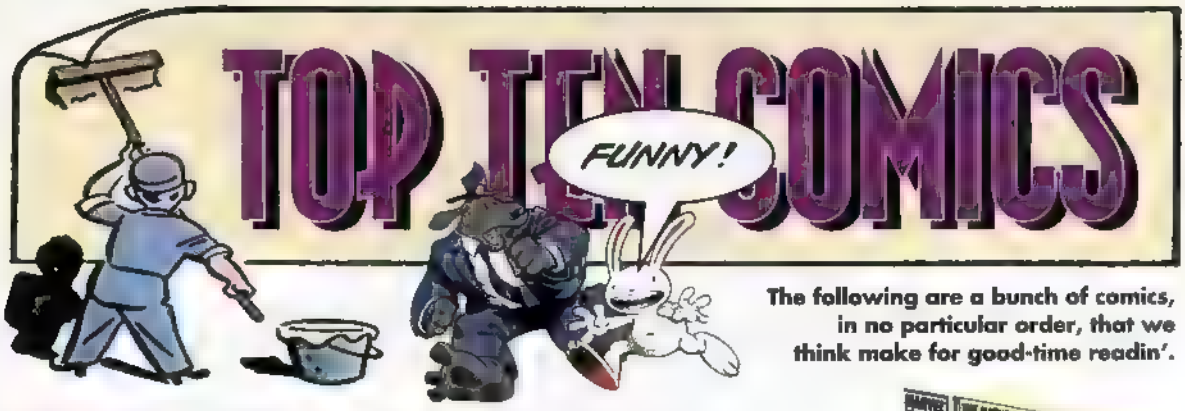
The name says it all. Next.

10. STARRO THE CONQUERER



In a nutshell, he's an evil starfish from outer space bent on world conquest. Ouch.

Jack Flag & The Thing ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Torque ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc. Troll ™ & © Bob Lindell Inc. Hero Zero ™ & © Dark Horse Comics. Starro the Conqueror ™ & © DC Comics.



The following are a bunch of comics, in no particular order, that we think make for good-time readin'.

WHAT THE—?! (Original Series)

WRITERS: A whole slew o' guys who can spell ARTISTS: A buncha folks who know how to work a pencil

Yeah, yeah, most of the *What The ?!*'s sucked ass, but the first couple of issues of the mini-series'll make you laugh so hard your colon'll burst. The art alone is a hoot, spotlighting the Marvel characters in the most caricaturally-ridiculous way. And the stories and ads are a riot. Take, for instance, the Pulverizer story, starring a super-violent Punisher doing stuff like sticking lollipops in his armpits and jamming 'em back in li'l kids' mouths, Dr. Droolid yelling, "Mootants is da craziest pipplest!", and all sorts of stuff that's funnier when you read it in the book than here. And the "Hero of the Beach/Quit kicking sand in my face" ad with the Iron Man armor is the best. And hey, don't forget that that McFarlane fella did a story in one of the mini-series's issues. You figure out which one.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #231-#232

WRITER: Roger Stern ARTISTS: John Romita Jr. & Jim Mooney

Well, these two books aren't really in the same vein as the rest of the books on this list, but they are two of the funniest "mainstream" comics on the planet. Roger Stern captures everything that Spider-Man should be (and hey, not a clone in sight!). You'll see Spidey deliver snappy banter like nobody else in the superhero biz (none of which will do these books justice if we print 'em here, so you'll have to take our word for it), watch him razz big-time supervillains, and see Peter Parker deal with everyday problems like bills and sprained ankles, and sew web-armpits onto his Spidey suit. In other words, see Peter Parker act like Peter Parker. Top-notch stuff. And if these two gems tickle your whatever, check out all the rest of the Stern/Romita Jr. issues for a taste of how comics should be done.

SAM & MAX FREELANCE POLICE

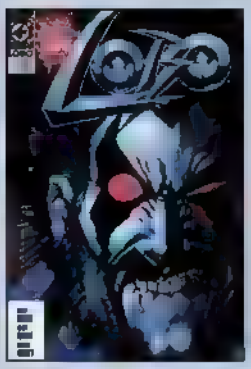
WRITER: Steve Purcell
ARTIST: Steve Purcell (Hmm... think they're related?)

"Sweet Jesus in a smoking birchbark canoe! What in the good God is that?" Why, it's a fast-talkin', funny-lookin', private eye type dog and his faithful spending-every-moment-searching-for-violence-and-mayhem rabbit, *and* it's a pretty damn hilarious book! Let Sam (the funny doggie) and Max (the cute li'l bunny) teach you the fine arts of Fizzball and how to make a realistic gun out of soap. They also fight off demons in a supermarket, make a game out of bologna, and enjoy eating weasels on a stick! And if you think these guys are funny here, you should check 'em out in their own video game put out by LucasArts, where you'll learn some cool stuff, like the fact that Sea Monkeys are not primates! So take our advice; if you see Sam & Max on something, buy it. It'll probably be pretty darn great.

LOBO (Mini-Series) #1-#4

WRITERS: Keith Giffen & Alan Grant
ARTIST: Simon Bisley

Hah! As good as the ongoing Lobo series is (hats off to Messrs. Alan Grant and Val Semeiks), the original four-issue mini-series was tops. It's just too damn funny for its own good. See Lobo protecting his fourth grade teacher Ms. Tribb from the forces of the Legion of Decency and bar brawlers, all the while doing his best not to rip her in two for writing an unauthorized biography about the Main Man. See Lobo pull people's heads off! Land on people from balconies! Drink a Mai Tai! Everything that makes a comic great is in here, and the Simon Bisley art just throws the whole fraggin' thing over the top. Go buy 'n' read it.



WHAT THE?! & AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. SAM & MAX ™ & © Steve Purcell. LOBO ™ & © DC Comics.

FUN WITH MILK & CHEESE

WRITER: Evan Dorkin
ARTIST: Evan Dorkin

Dairy products gone bad! If you're into mindless violence and cute li'l cartoon guys boozin' on gin, puking on people outta windows, and beatin' the crap outta anything that crosses their path, this book is for you! Y'see, Milk, a carton of hate, and Cheese, a wedge of spite, are what every man, woman, and child should aspire to. They speak their minds, don't let people take advantage of 'em, ridicule numerous bastions of pop culture (like home shopping networks—"Where's the Goddam Cubic Zirconium lady?!?"), and they ignore all o' the laws that are silly and shouldn't be adhered to anyway ("Milk—out the window—aim for that old lady!" "BLORLGF!" "Yes! YES! You got her!"). Stand-up Americans, these two.

TM & © Evan Dorkin

GREGORY

WRITER: Marc Hempel
ARTIST: Marc Hempel

Gregory is different. What we learn here in a series of short stories is the following: Gregory is nuts. He's locked up in an asylum and kept in a straight jacket 24 hours a day. He's got a giant melon for a head. He says "zub" and "Kee Kee" a lot. His rodent pal Herman Vermin was beaten to death twice with a broom, and was reincarnated as himself. Twice. Once as a homosexual. Gregory occasionally has, among other things, cheese in his pants. So while *Gregory* (by Hempel, the current *Sandman* artist) isn't your standard fare, the li'l bugger can be hysterical, moving, touching, and at times, really sad. So hey, don't be a comic geek; try something new once in a while. Go find *Gregory*, and read it.

TM & © Marc Hempel

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #417

WRITER: Peter David
ARTISTS: Gary Frank and Cam Smith

Hah! This is the big bachelor party issue for Rick Jones, as he shares a "quiet" evening with a bunch of his hero friends. While the girls head out to a male strip joint, Cap thoroughly embarrasses himself by hiring an ecdysiast (that's a stripper, silly) to perform, thinking she's a magician, and later "has something in his eye" and can't watch when everyone watches some porno flick. And speakin' of porno flicks, boy, does Rick's face turn red when he discovers that Marlo's the star! But, as the Vision states, "That is your fiancée? You must be very proud." So, if you thought this book was just full of "Hulk smash puny humans," well, you're just plain wrong, bucko! A standout issue of a really excellent series.

TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #266

WRITER: Peter David
ARTISTS: Sal Buscema and Joe Rubinstein

Hey, it's another Spidey book and another Peter David book! What gives? Well, with all the deaths, clones, confusion, and just plain ol' trauma Spidey's been goin' through lately, it's a real treat to see our favorite Web-Head jokin' around with a true bunch of misfits. The trouble starts this issue when Spidey prevents the Toad (y'know, Magneto's freakish flunky) from leaping to his death. Toady decides to pay back Spidey by becoming his new partner, whether Spidey wants it or not (and believe me, he wants it not!). Throw in the Fabulous Frogman and a surprise special guest, and you've got one poundin' headache for the wall-crawler, and a bellyful of laughs for you readers.

TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group

AMBUSH BUG (Mini-Series)

WRITER: Keith Giffen
ARTIST: Keith Giffen and Bob Oksner

POP It's the bug with the mostest, and his doll sidekick Cheeks, the Toy Wonder. What can ya say about Ambush Bug that hasn't been said lately? Probably a lot, since nobody talks about 'im anymore!!! This bug comes from one of the guys who invented—among many other things—the infamous JLA guffaw (y'know, "bwah-ha-ha"), so ya just know this's gotta be a goodie. The Bug goes up against the roughest DC characters of all time: Darkseid, Scabbard, and Argh! Yle, Evilest of Socks! You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll spend like two years searchin' through back issue bins to find it, but it's worth it. You might even start wearing green tights and antennae and start teleportin' around town fightin' crime. Well, maybe not. *POP*

TM & © DC Comics

WHAT IF? #34

WRITERS: Too many to count
ARTISTS: Ditto

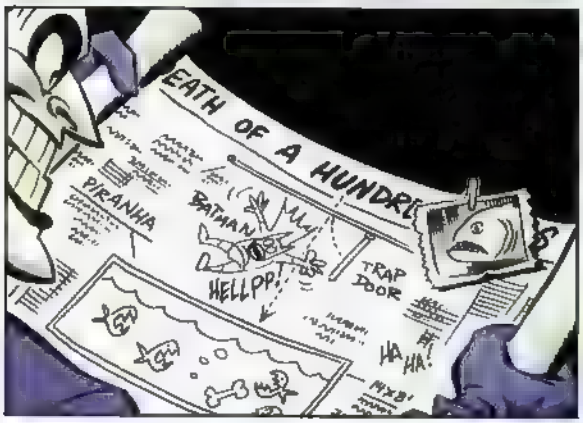
Just like *What The—?!*, this issue pokes fun at the entire Marvel Universe by coming up with some of the wackiest ideas ever! There's a tale where Reed Richards and the gang stay home and send fruit up into space instead, resulting in a Fantastic Four made up of bananas! Luke Cage finds Thor's hammer and starts shouting stuff like, "By the gleamin' gates of funky Asgard, you suckers are gonna eat hammer!" And the best of the lot is a big white box depicting the Silver Surfer, White Tiger, Night Rider, Iceman, and Moon Knight fighting the Wendigo in a snowstorm. So if you've ever thought of your own *What If?s*, but figured they were too stupid to ever see print, then check this issue out—they'll probably be in here. ☆

TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group

This One'll Kill Ya!

Hey, nothing is more fun– especially around April Fool's Day– than having a good time at someone else's expense, and that's what this contest is all about. So pull up a chair and start scheming, cause here's what you can win:

Photograph © 1995 Harry Palatsios



Grand Prize (One winner)

One winner walks off with a fine-looking animation cel of Batman and the Joker, mounted onto a limited edition storyboard from the "Laughing Fish" episode of the *Batman: The Animated Series*, and signed by the actor who plays the Clown Prince of Crime himself, Mark Hamill! It's a snappy prize, Batfans!

And here's how you can win: In 50 words or less, typed or neatly handwritten, describe to us a practical joke that takes a little bit of creativity and a whole lot o' cleverness. We're talkin' a physical joke, using several contraptions that connect to each other in a chain reaction sorta process. If you've ever seen the Tom 'n' Jerry, Wile E. Coyote/Road Runner, or Roger Rabbit cartoons, you know what we mean—someone steps on a switch, which sets off a whole slew of contraptions, finally causing a bucket of water to unload itself onto the victim. So we're lookin' for wild, complex, not-necessarily-possible jokes here! (We're *not* looking for the Joker's type of whoppers, though—don't make your joke dangerous or—gulp—deadly. Any entries deemed by the judges to be obscene, illegal, or dangerous will be disqualified, bucko.)

Now, whatever the joke is, we don't want you actually creating the masterpiece and setting it off on anyone; all we want is the description. If you want to help us visualize the joke, you can draw a "blueprint" of it above the text—that'd be a cool addition to your entry. Once you've got all that cooked up, stuff the joke, attached to the coupon below, in an envelope, and mail that sucker off to:

WIZARD®

Joke's on You Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

The creator of the most creative, original entry scores the booty! This contest expires June 30, 1995, so get off your ass and get movin'!

ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 30, 1995

JOKE'S ON YOU CONTEST

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

ENCLOSE YOUR JOKE DESCRIPTION ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

LAUGHABLE LEGAL LINGO

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and the entire Funt family. "We thought it would be funny & we ... Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card. Attach your joke entry to the form or card. Mail each entry to Joke's on You Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No machine-of reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local) if any, will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law or is manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules herein. Any entries deemed by the judges to be illegal, or dangerous will be immediately disqualified. Decision of the judges is final. One of our favorite practical jokes is lifting the seat of a toilet, wrapping the opening, with Saran Wrap, then putting the seat back down. It especially aggravates the ladies. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1995. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected by the Wizard staffers for most originality and creativity. The judging will be conducted on July 3, 1995, by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name (available after July 4, 1995), send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Joke's on You Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching Wizard!

Batman & Joker ™ & © DC Comics

Wizard Market Watch

by **Jon Warren** and **Marc Wilkofsky**

Ready-to-Eat News!

Changes, changes everywhere—and we don't just mean price increases! In an effort to offer you a more accessible and info-filled Market Watch each month, and please those of you who prefer those nifty li'l sound bites to in-depth news briefs, we're altering the format of this column! It'll now have shorter, more "digestible" blurbs about today's—and yesterday's—hot (and cool) collectibles, and the comic market happenings you need to hear about. So why are you still readin' this intro? Sink your teeth into the "meat" of this thing, already!

THE HOT RECENT RELEASES (1991-95)

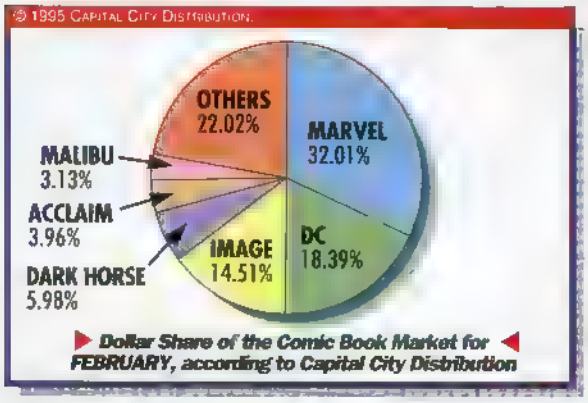
•The X-Men books (Marvel Comics). For months now, Marvel's family of mutant titles has been holding the market's sales charts hostage, thanks to the phenomenally well-received "Legion Quest"/"After Xavier" epic. Even though Marvel doesn't have much to speak for in the collector enthusiasm department outside of the X-books and Spiderverse, the company has got to be grateful for this recent revamping, retailers who are selling out of and slowly raising the prices of these books certainly are thankful. Hot titles include ***Amazing X-Men***, ***Generation Next***, ***Weapon X***, and ***X-Calibre*** (all of whose #1's have seen value jumps this month). The books to watch: ***X-Men* #41** and ***X-Men Alpha***, which started it all.

•*Generation X/Next* (Marvel). If you're looking for an X-book that's definitely more than a sleeper in popularity, Tom Shea of TJ Collectibles in Milford, Mass., notes, "***Generation X*** has been the most successful Marvel launch in quite some time. What has been a pleasant surprise is that sales of **#2-#3** have held steady." This holds true across the market, to the delight of many retailers, who initially wondered if only the heavily purchased #1 would be the hot seller of the series.

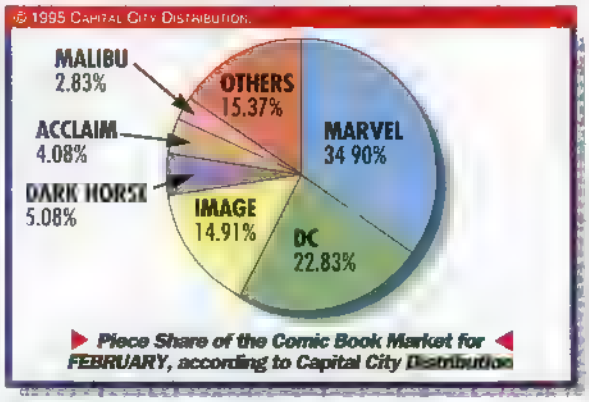
•The Spider-Man titles (Marvel). As more Spider-issues are webbed into the far-reaching, long-running Clone Saga, it appears that not every fan and collector is sticking around. Top-seller ***Amazing Spider-Man* #400** should become the powerhouse Spidey book of the lot, with its depiction of the apparent death of Aunt May, and its morbid partner ***Spectacular Spider-Man* #217** went up a bit due to Doctor Octopus's demise, but the rest of the story is just hanging there. (It could be that people are getting tired of the incessant tidal wave of plotlines and Peter Parkers.) It gets worse in the Silver Age market (see below).

•*Gen*[13] and related books (Image Comics). While most of the *Gen*[13] issues presently on the market are within the same value brackets as last month (with the exception of **#5**, steadily catching up to **#4**'s $10-plus mark), they can't be touched by the disinterest disease. Semi-spinoff ***Team 7*** (featuring some *Gen*[12]-ers) is a definite Watchable, as its first issue continually climbs the value mountain on a monthly basis. Also, the ex-Team 7 member with the rockin' tendrils, Backlash, is at the center of every Image readers' attention, taking ***StormWatch* #3**—his first appearance—to new heights. And look out for the regular *Gen* series...

•*Prophet* artist report (Image). Fan favorite artist Stephen Platt, is garnering a bit less attention these days, bringing his initial Image work—***Prophet* #4A**, with the Platt-ered variant cover—down a touch (joined by another Platt biggie, Marvel's ***Moon Knight* #55**—his first *full* comics work). Don't take it too hard, Platt fans 'n' collectors—he's still got some solid market juice, it's just that there's an army of hot artists squeezing out people's attention and funds today.



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for FEBRUARY, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for FEBRUARY, according to Capital City Distribution

DOLLAR SHARE: DC, Dark Horse, and Acclaim did fairly well in February, thanks to their 100th anniversary issue promotion (starting with the successful *Flash* #100), *Mask/Star Wars/Legend* title combination, and "Birthquake," respectively. DC gained 1.11 points; Dark Horse, 0.69; Acclaim, 0.68. Marvel's decrease this month of a sizable 1.64 points results from a cut in orders during the slower first quarter of the year, when retailers take less risks. Image's share stayed just about the same as last month.

PIECE SHARE: DC jumped a whopping 2.48 points here this month, mostly due to its increased amount of quality releases, while Dark Horse (with a 1.19-point rise) and Acclaim (up 0.95) both did well, thanks to their own solid products. Image gained 1.08 points, obviously winning over more readers. The shares for both Marvel and its new acquisition, Malibu, dropped this month; Marvel's drop stems from its lower number of #1 X-releases, and Malibu's is possibly due to the company's cover price hike.

•***Flash*** (DC Comics). DC has been lighting up comic shelves nationwide, thanks to the scarlet speedster. While the six recent "Terminal Velocity" issues from #95 to the cornerstone #100 have been solid movers, the real market shakers are **#92-#94**, the first few appearances of Flash's protégé Impulse. #92, Impulse's true first appearance, is selling as rapidly as ever, but he's a central figure in the next two issues (as well as **#0** and **#95**, to some extent) making 'em all huntable. Also, ***Flash* #88-#91**, featuring two integral stories in the hero's career—his "hero negligence" trial for letting an innocent bystander get severely injured during a battle, and his reaching and dealing with a new speed level—are quickly being scooped up and becoming quite scarce.

•***Wonder Woman*** (DC Comics). DC's amazing amazon is still a powerhouse in the market, as collectors are getting over their initial surprise and realizing that the Bad Girl duo of the new WW and Diana, the growing popularity of artist Mike Deodato Jr., the strong writing by William Messner-Loebs, and the overall scarcity of the books to begin with are giving every *WW* issue from **#88** up sizable heat, with **#0** recognized as the ish to jump on. And with writer-artist John Byrne set to take over *WW* with **#101** in July, things can only soar from here.

•***Superman* and *Green Lantern*** (DC Comics). Two once-super-scalding DCs are experiencing "down time": ***Superman* #75** and ***Green Lantern* #46**. Both were essential parts in major storylines—the former, the "Death of Supes" issue in the Doomsday epic; the latter, a sleeper "Reign of the Supermen" X-over installment—but collectors are somewhat fickle as well as forgetful, and the latest "Death of Clark Kent" and new GL storylines are helping 'em out in that respect. (Some folks might have expected the CK epic to re-energize interest in the first "Death" books, but it's just the reverse.) Plus, old GL Hal Jordan's re-emergence might put things back in order for *Green Lantern*. We'll continue to watch these and other fall-from-grace candidates, to keep you informed as well as nervous.

•**Vertigo titles.** Meanwhile, an expected bit o' interest is occurring in the Vertigoverse: Death's more-than-a-cameo appearance in ***The Books of Magic* (ongoing series) #4** is taking off, as more *Sandman* fans realize it's still out there and relatively accessible (and it's a well-done story, natch). Of course, the ***Sandman*** book itself is still a consistently vigorous seller, thanks to "The Kindly Ones" storyline (the one where Sandy's supposed to kick the bucket) and the title's end approaching shortly thereafter. Also, readers are anxiously anticipating the new Vertigo titles coming up, especially the dark comedy title *Preacher*, by the awesome *Hellblazer* team of Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon.

•**The Bad Girl trend** (various publishers). It-just-won't-stop-until-you-are-dead: This major movement is still rolling on and holding fast. A fan feeding frenzy's goin' on with Eternity's ***Evil Ernie*** series, which gave us Lady Death herself—the issues have soared way past the roof. Her solo Chaos! Comics books aren't doing too shabby, either; these include her first mini-series issues, and the ***Swimsuit Special***—with the sequel to this hot pin-up book diving into stores soon, people are calming their impatience for it with this baby. ***Shi*** is the market's other tremendous kicker, as **#1-#2** keep plowing upward in value, making themselves and issues **#3-#4** THE Bad Girl books to be buyin' (and reading, of course—the story's worth every cent). Harris's Vampi issues (especially ***Vengeance of Vampirella* #1**, which hasn't cooled down since publication last year) are still sure bets, but you've gotta start looking beyond the original trio of Bad Girls these days.

•**Newer Bad Girls** (various publishers). London Night Studios's ***Razor*** appears to be in the stronger-than-ever zone, with the original **#1**'s value seeing monthly jumps, and her first annual (Shi's debut issue!) soaring to $20. The entire series is becoming a definite scorcher in the secondary (back issue) market, joined by Lady Rawhide's intro—the powerful ***Zorro* #3**—and Wonder Woman's aforementioned scarce issues. One interesting notable: several

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

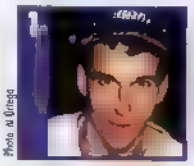


Photo: Al Ortega

1. **Todd McFarlane** — *Spawn*

Photo: Al Ortega

2. **Frank Miller** — *Sin City: The Big Fat Kill*

3. **Alex Ross** — upcoming: *Kingdom Come*

4. **Buzz** — *Vampirella*

5. **Jim Lee** — *WildC.A.T.s*

6. **Joe Quesada** — *Ash*

Photo: Al Ortega

7. **Jeff Smith** — *Bone*

8. **Stephen Platt** — *Prophet*

9. **Greg Capullo** — *Angela*

Photo: J. Schaefer

10. **Adam Kubert** — *Wolverine*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

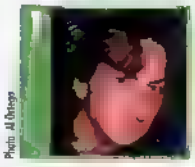


Photo: Al Ortega

1. **Frank Miller** — *Sin City: The Big Fat Kill*

Photo: Al Ortega

2. **Neil Gaiman** — *Sandman, Angela*

3. **Peter David** — *Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099*

Photo: Al Ortega

4. **Jeff Smith** — *Bone*

5. **John Byrne** — *Next Men*, upcoming: *Wonder Woman*

Photo: Al Ortega

6. **Fabian Nicieza** — *X-Men*

Photo: J. Schaefer

7. **Scott Lobdell** — *Uncanny X-Men, Generation X*

8. **Chris Claremont** — *Aliens vs. Predator: D. of S., Cyberforce, Sovereign 7*

9. **Dan Jurgens** — *Superman, Solar*

Photo: Mitch Jacobs

10. **Alan Moore** — upcoming: *Spawn: Bloodfeud From Hell*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

Market WATCHERS

It's time for the Market Watchin' Fools, people! I've saved up these...uh, *different* letters to commemorate our April Fool's issue; here goes...

Dear Wizard,

I have a comic book that I have been trying to get a price for. It is *Captain Carrot and His Amazing Zoo Crew* #1 from DC Comics.

Vince Gould
Harrow, Ontario, Canada

You can get an amazing dollar for the opener to the 1982-83 series most people never believed would happen; I hope *you* didn't believe you had a happening book.

Dear Wizard,

Did you know that *Wonder Woman* #140 (August 1963) contains a very early Sandman appearance? Maybe? He is described by Diana as "Morpheus, the god of Dreams..." who "can make the most fantastic wish imagined by anyone come true...in the dreams he grants!" Morpheus, semi-transparent, and dressed like an ancient Roman, shows Diana the dreams of Mister Genie, Merboy, and the Duke of Deception. OK, so this guy is a little different than the version of Morpheus we all know and love, but his appearance makes *WW* #140 a book worth giving a second glance.

Kenan Cooper
Reading, MA

As a Wonder Woman follower myself, I sometimes forget that I share my fanship with a number of loons. Thanks very much for reminding me, Kenan. And the answer's no.

Dear Wizard Guys,

I found a nearly complete set of comics called *DP7* (that's Displaced Paranormals 7) and was wondering how much they might be worth. I haven't seen them listed in the guide; so I figured they aren't worth much. Should I keep them?

Ryan Armstrong
New York, New York

You're on the right track, Ryan—you haven't seen 'em in the guide because the comic world hasn't seen these New Universe (that's mostly hard-to-read garbage) books anywhere but in three-for-a-buck boxes; there's not much price activity happenin' there. But since *DP7* is one of the only two memorable New U titles (*Star Brand*'s the other, as I noted in #43's column), you could save the set and read about the persecuted supergroup over and over, instead of getting, at most, $16 for the 32 issues ('round 50 cents each, $17 if the annual's in there.) Yep, just read 'em over and over, like I seem to be doing with all the missives from New U owner I've been receiving. Hold up for a while, OK, people?

Dear you excellent, happenin' dudes at Wizard,

I have some questions on unlisted comics; I'd like to know how much they're worth. The first one I have is *Silver Star* #1, printed back in '82 and done by Jack Kirby. Second, *2001: A Space Odyssey* #1, printed by Marvel in 1976. Now, one more—this one probably isn't worth much—but it's called *Psi-Force* #1, printed by Marvel back in '86. Well, that's all.

Chris Meadows
Cartersville, GA

Finally—a breath of fresh air; some value questions for serious books. The *Silver Star* issue's worth only a dollar in Near Mint, but your *2001* book's a two-bucker (if it's in NM), whether you have the '76 one-shot or the '76 movie tie-in. And as for your final boo—oh no, another New U...ni...verse b-book! Only...one dollar...if...very lucky. Must...break...free!

publishers are currently on a take-a-female-character-and-make-her-Bad kick, driving them to alter several heroines (like DC's Black Canary and Superman cast member Thom) and antiheroines (such as Malibu's NecraMantra) enough to give 'em Bad Girl status. The competition's getting fierce and heavy, folks...

•***Ash*** (Event Comics). In its first few months as a comic publisher, Event has been scoring in at least two ways with its hot hero Ash: readers are wholeheartedly enjoying his early adventures (something you don't often hear about new heroes nowadays), and collectors are consumed by the Find the #1 Challenge, made possible by that strong-selling book's megararity. As Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's fireman-crimefighter reaches his third and fourth issues, the search should get more frantic, and "collectable" will be an understatement for issues **#1** and **#2**

•**TV and movie books** (various publishers). It didn't take too long for Topps's ***X-Files* #1** to become an explosive seller and TOUGH find. "This is definitely the hottest up-and-coming comic to emerge in several months," says William Christensen, from Champaign, Ill.'s Comic Cavalcade, about this adaptation (with new stories!) of the well-watched sci-fi TV show. The totally new material, and demand from outside the "normal" comic-buying world, are both probable reasons for the supernatural-filled book's obvious success. Those on a quest for market life in other TV books might find ***Babylon 5*** a good possibility, for just about the same reasons. As for movie comic characters, the Crow is still warm (an early appearance, ***Caliber Presents* #15**, sees a value increase this month), but the Mask is definitely on the cooling side (nice knowing ya, ***Mayhem*** books—"Big-Head's" debut series has lost quite a bit o' market momentum)

MODERN AGE SELLERS (1970-90)

•**Spider-Man books** (Marvel). Marvel's ***Amazing Spider-Man* #149-#151**, the beginning of the Clone Saga that (in a way) spanned 20 years, has just begun to cool down in interest, and just at a time when collectors predicted fireworks would explode much more than they have: the publication of *ASM* #400, which was supposed to be the saga's climax, tying everything up. Well, it wasn't and it didn't, and the Spidey-collecting-and-selling population is getting bored—and restless, which means gradual price decreases in order to move the books. Things may pick up in the coming months; we'll let you know either way

•***New Mutants*** (Marvel). Coming closer to the end of the Modern Age, issues **#25-#28** and **#44** of this mutant teen team are still burnin' up the market because of one word. Legion. Prof. Xavier's universe-changing son's first few appearances are without a doubt sure-fire market movers. Get 'em while you still can—*if* you can

•***Incredible Hulk*** (Marvel). ***Hulk* #181** is still a megabook in the Modern Age domain. The first full appearance of Wolverine is considered by many collectors as among the most important of the so-called "Bronze Age" comics. Near Mint copies are getting tougher to find, driving the price up.

•**Various Modern Age steamers** (various publishers). DC's ***Green Lantern* #76-#89**, Neal Adams's first work for DC, ***Ms. Marvel* #16-#18**, rising X-star Mystique's intro issues, Marvel's ***Star Wars* #1**, always a strong find and getting stronger as the new films get closer; and the first ***Swamp Thing*** series—this classic title with early Berni Wrightson art remains the top seller among '70s DC books

POPULAR SILVER AGE BOOKS (1955-70)

•***Adventure Comics*** (DC Comics). Issue **#210** of this 1938-1983 series is the first appearance of the original Krypto (the super-dog), and very sought after by knowledgeable Silver Age DC collectors. Krypto isn't so important (even though there's a new version of him running around now); the demand has more to do with the legendary rarity of this issue. The white cover is almost never found in top-notch condition, so if you're a DC Silver collector and you happen across a high-grade copy at a convention or your local shop, snap it up.

•***Amazing Fantasy* #15** (Marvel). The first appearance and ori-

gin of Spider-Man, ***Amazing Fantasy* #15** from Marvel Comics, recently sold for $1,000 in Good condition, according to Greg Bartholomew of All-American Comics in Warren, Ohio. "Good," by definition, means rough and worn. The sale validates the reports by many retailers of key Silver Age books selling in all grades.

•***Detective Comics*** (DC Comics) ***Detective Comics* #233**, the debut and origin of Batwoman, is another minor key that has the scarcity/demand factor working for it. Early '50s DC books have always been tough to find, and this one is no exception. The current trend among collectors of first buying the key appearances and origin issues, then filling in the other issues in the run, is putting more demand emphasis on books like this one. *Tec* #233 moved to $925 this month, up from $850 last month.

•***Fantastic Four*** (Marvel) The first appearance of Black Panther, Marvel's ***Fantastic Four* #52**, moved up to $75 this month, a price that seems like a bargain compared to some of the other key first appearances of the same time period.

THE GOLDEN AGE MARKET (1938-54)

Here's a quick peek at two particular GA books, and two general titles, you should be watching (if you're into that sort of thing).

•***All Star Comics* #8** (DC Comics) The first appearance of Wonder Woman has been among those most-requested, according to our recent poll of GA retailers. WW's current popularity probably isn't the main factor causing GA collectors to add this one to their want lists, but it probably doesn't hurt, either. The main catalyst for interest in this book is simply its importance in comic history and supreme rarity.

•***Batman* #1** (DC Comics) Retailer Keith Contarino of Atlanta, Ga. sold a copy in Very Good condition for $10,000. This #1 is always popular with big-buck-book collectors that have the bankroll to afford it, and this summer's Batman movie is sure to wake up even more interest among Golden Age fans.

•***The Flash*, first series** (DC Comics). All issues are selling well, especially those with Hawkman covers, issue **#104** (the final Golden Age one), and, of course, issue **#1** when a copy turns up. Steve Fishler of Metropolis Comics in New York City just sold a copy of #104 in Fine condition for $1,300.

•***Captain America Comics*** (Timely Comics) Low supply, very high demand. Condition isn't important to collectors of these GA jewels. The entire 78-issue run is selling well, according to retailers who deal in GA books.

Well, we're on the market-watchin' road till next month; see you then, and as usual, best of luck with meeting your collecting challenges! ★

Jon Warren and Marc Wilkofsky are both proud to be Country music fans. Wanna make something of it, bub?

Dear Marc,

In *Wizard* #42, you asked what the heck a "NORF" is. Have you never watched *Animaniacs* before?! NORF is Pinky's favorite expression. So is "ZOT." Get with the times, Wilkofsky.

Adam Kemptar
North Platte, NE

Oy! Can't believe I missed that one—I *am* an *Animaniacs* fan; I guess I just never focussed on the Pinky and the Brain segments. My fave characters are Yakko and Slappy the squirrel, and I'm eagerly awaiting DC's ongoing comic series, but I suppose I'm more into another popular program, where I've learned words like "intubate," "stat," and "tox screen." What? You don't watch TV's hottest new show, *ER*? Get with the times, Kemptar!

Dear Market Watchers,

I found a half-burnt copy of *Justice League of America* #23. It was on a seat at a bus stop right next to my local comic store. The lower right-hand quarter of the book is almost completely charred and black, but the rest of the book is in pretty OK condition. I was wondering if this book is still worth anything, especially since it's the first story with the Queen Bee, who is sort of like a Bad Girl, and it's one of those Silver Age books. Thanks for all your help.

Benjamin Reade
Springfield, IL

The easy answer here is two or three dollars, which is what such a less-than-Poor-minus book would bring you. The true mystery surrounds the actual book itself; the best I could come up with is that this dismal book is the remnant of a collector's house fire, which the victim *tried* to pawn off at your store. Hope you find the luck that guy couldn't!

Dear Market Watchers,

I have a few questions and comments.

1) I have a copy of *Chaos Effect: Omega* with a gold cover. What is this very spiffy comic worth?

2) Hey! You! Jonathan Reth! I know you're reading this! If you say "NORF!" one more time, I'll rip out your intestines with a pitchfork! (Just kidding, NORF!)

3) How many licks does it take to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop?

Albert Watkins
Lorain, OH

The answer to your serious question is a very spiffy $15, in that ol' impressive Near Mint condition. As for the lick count, I think it's 107, but you should ask Jim McLauchlin, care of our Magic Words department—he'd love to answer this question, as he's been doing for a year now.

Dear Market Watchers,

I have a question regarding the X-books. After the "After Xavier" story is over, are the X-books going to pick up right where they left off, or will there be four numbers missing?

Also, thank you for finally listing the price for *Gen*^{13} #1/2. And a NORF is a word used by the goofy mouse character on *Animaniacs*. It's also known as a "brain fart," which happens when you're talking about something, and you lose your train of thought and your speech comes to an abrupt halt.

Mike Clement
Ringgold, CA

Yeah, uh huh, sure. Well, Mike, it looks like the X-books will most definitely be...NORF! Strange. Anyway, isn't Ringgold Ralph Dibny's drink of choice? No, that's gingold. Wonder what's happening with Elongated Man these days. Now, where was I? Oh, yeah—the X-books are continuing the pre-timeflip numbering, like *Uncanny X-Men* #322, etc., which should please collectors. Got sidetracked there for a minute, I guess.

That's about it, fools! By the way, one of the above letters is actually an April Fool's joke from me to y'all. Try to figure out which one it is (I'll tell ya next month), send in your own letters, and I'll see ya in 30!

-Marc Wilkolsky
Emotional about Aunt May

Hey, Market Watchers! Send your letters to:

MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

THE NOT QUITE TOP 100

Here's some stuff we got from Diamond Comic Distributors Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

TOP 10 Twisted Sister Tunes

10. You Can't Stop Rock 'n' Roll
9. Bad Boys (of Rock 'n' Roll)
8. You're Not Alone (Suzette's Song)
7. The Kids are Back
6. Love is for Suckers
5. Like a Knife in the Back
4. Burn in Hell
3. The Price
2. Run for your Life
1. I Am (I'm Me)

TOP 10 Least Favorite Muppets

10. Miss Piggy
9. Scooter's uncle who owns the theater
8. Janice—like for sure
7. The Fonz
6. Any of those big Muppets with guys in 'em
5. Miss Piggy (again)
4. Sam the Eagle
3. Nanny or any Muppet Baby
2. Robin
1. Scooter

201. Elven #2 (Malibu)
202. Mortal Kombat: Battlewave #2 (Malibu)
203. Shadowman #38 (Acclaim)
204. Outsiders #18 (DC)
205. Fate #7 (DC)
206. X #13 (Dark Horse)
207. Bar Sinister #2 (Acclaim)
208. Nexus: Wages of Sin #1 (Dark Horse)
209. Fantastic Four Collector's Preview #1 (Marvel)
210. Judge Dredd: Legends of the Law #6 (DC)
211. Kabuki: Circle of Blood #2 (Caliber)
212. Nocturnals #3 (Malibu)
213. Satanika #3 (Verotik)
214. Blood Pack #3 (DC)
215. Midnight Sons Unlimited #9 (Marvel)
216. Deathstroke #47 (DC)
217. Ghost in the Shell #2 (Dark Horse)
218. The Night Man #18 (Malibu)
219. The Psyba-Rats #2 (DC)
220. Marvel: Portraits of a Universe #3 (Marvel)
221. Blaze #10 (Marvel)
222. Amazing Spider-Man Collection #1 (Marvel)
223. Strangers #22 (Malibu)
224. Animal Man #83 (DC)
225. Elfquest: Hidden Years #21 (Warp)
226. Penthouse Men's Adv. Comix #1 (Penthouse)
227. Firearm #18 (Malibu)
228. Double Impact #1 (High Impact)
229. Starslayer: The Director's Cut #3 (Acclaim)
230. Agents of Law #1 (Dark Horse)
231. Starslayer: The Director's Cut #4 (Acclaim)
232. Mobfire #6 (DC)
233. Nexus: Out of the Vortex #2 (Dark Horse)
234. Hate #18 (Fantagraphics)
235. Tank Girl Movie Adaptation (DC)
236. Skeleton Warriors #2 (Marvel)
237. Archangels the Saga #1 (Eternal)
238. Elfquest: Shards #8 (Warp)
239. Black Orchid #21 (DC)
240. Hardcase #21 (Malibu)
241. Blade: The Vampire Hunter #11 (Marvel)
242. Ranma 1/2 Part IV #3 (Viz)
243. Indiana Jones & the Iron Phoenix #4 (D. Horse)
244. Gargoyles #4 (Marvel)
245. Elfquest: New Blood #27 (Warp)
246. Domu: A Child's Dreams #1 (Dark Horse)
247. Elfquest: Blood of Ten Chiefs #16 (Warp)
248. Oh My Goddess! Part 2 #2 (Dark Horse)
249. The Man Called A-X #4 (Malibu)
250. Jink #5 (Warp)
251. Cerebus #192 (Aardvark-Vanaheim)
252. Icon #25 (DC)
253. Freex #18 (Malibu)
254. The Demon #58 (DC)
255. My Name is Holocaust #1 (DC)
256. Star Blazers #0 (Argo)
257. The Restaurant at the End of the Universe #3 (DC)
258. Battletech. Fallout #4 (Malibu)
259. Uncle Scrooge #292 (Hamilton)
260. Rebels #5 (Warp)
261. Sabretooth Classic #13 (Marvel)
262. Aladdin #8 (Marvel)
263. Beauty and the Beast (Marvel)
264. Mortal Kombat: Rayden/Kano #1 CE (Malibu)
265. Original Turok, Son of Stone #4 (Acclaim)
266. Marvel Spotlight on Silver Surfer #1 (Marvel)
267. Blood Syndicate #26 (DC)
268. Eightball #15 (Fantagraphics)
269. Mortal Kombat: Rayden/Kano #1 (Malibu)
270. The Little Mermaid #9 (Marvel)
271. Mandrake #2 (Marvel)
272. The Frankenstein-Dracula War #2 (Topps)
273. Hardware #27 (DC)
274. The Lion King Movie Adaptation (Marvel)
275. Marvel Spotlight on Silver Surfer #2 (Marvel)
276. Battle Angel Alita Part IV #4 (Viz)
277. Marvel Spotlight on Silver Surfer #3 (Marvel)
278. Marvel Spotlight on Silver Surfer #4 (Marvel)
279. Dark Horse Presents #95 (Dark Horse)
280. James Bond 007 Quasimodo Gambit #3 (D. H.)
281. Looney Tunes #14 (DC)
282. Vamperotica #4 (Brainstorm)
283. Stray Bullets #1 (El Capitan)
284. Alice Cooper: The Last Temptation #3 (Marvel)
285. Original Magnus Robot Fighter #3 (Acclaim)
286. Strangers in Paradise #4 (Abstract Studio)
287. Doom 2099 A.D. #29 CE (Marvel)
288. Original Dr. Solar Man of the Atom (Acclaim)
289. Bloodchilde #3 (Millennium)
290. Gunfire #12 (DC)
291. Marvel Action Hour Featuring the F.F. #7 (Marvel)
292. Donald Duck Adventures #32 (Hamilton)
293. Duckman #5 (Topps)
294. Self-Loathing Comics #1 (Fantagraphics)
295. Colors in Black #1 (Dark Horse)
296. Neil Gaiman's Wheel of Worlds #0 CE (Tekno)
297. Star Wars: Dark Empire #4 (Dark Horse)
298. Marvel Action Hour Featuring Iron Man #7 (Marvel)
299. Walt Disney's Comics & Stories #597 (Hamilton)
300. Manga Vizion Vol. I #1 (Viz)

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

To help connect you with the biggest and best comic book shows and conventions in your area, *Wizard* is still printing all the stuff we used to print in this department. But we've added extra space so you can find out in advance about admission discounts, creator appearances, and other supermeat stuff!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

ARIZONA

APRIL 23, TEMPE

Phoenix Con II, Arizona's only major comic book convention, at Rockin Rodeo Entertainment Facility, Priest Rd. & Elliot Rd., 150 tables @ $75-$100 per table, $6 admission, 10am-5pm. Artist signing: Todd McFarlane (*Spawn, Violator*), Greg Capullo (*Spawn, Violator, Angela*), Al Simmons (a.k.a. Spawn) in the new Spawn costume, the Spawnmobile, and Angela live in costume. Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes (*Lady Death*, from Chaos! Comics), Marat Mychaels (*Battlestone, Knightmare*), Brian Denham (*Violator/Badrock*), Mike Mayhew (*Zorro, Lady Rawhide*). This convention will include comics, gaming, major toy and card distributors, and manufacturer displays. Contact: For info on tables, call Wayne @ 602-926-4851 or 1-800-467-2244; for advance tickets in AZ, visit your local comic book retailer, or call Dillards Box Office @ 602-678-2222. Don't miss Todd McFarlane at Phoenix Con II!

ARKANSAS

APRIL 22, JONESBORO

Comic Book & Non-Sports Show, Park Inn, 1421 South Caraway, 25 8-foot tables @ $40 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Contact: Cecil Johnson of The Comic Line @ 501-794-3394.

CALIFORNIA

APRIL 9, SAN JOSE

San Jose Sports Card & Comic Book Show, LeBaron Hotel, 1350 North First St., 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

APRIL 9 AND 23, SAN DIEGO

San Diego State University Twice-Monthly Comic, Sportscard, Toys, Pins, & Memorabilia show, Aztec Center Montezuma Hall (BE to College Ave. exit, go south on College Ave.) 100 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission (children under 8 free), 10am-5pm both days. Silent auction (to be bid upon by the public). Guest: To be announced, raffles held hourly, grand prize drawing held each afternoon. Contact: Julia @ 714-768-3575.

APRIL 29, SAN MATEO

San Mateo Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Dinfey Hotel, 1770 S. Amphlett Blvd. (Hwy. 92 @ Hwy. 101), 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

APRIL 30, SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Avenue @ Geary Blvd., 50 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

DELAWARE

APRIL 23, NEWARK

Small Wonder! Con, Best Western Newark, I-95 Exit 3 (Dover), next to University Plaza, 30-plus tables @ $50 each ($40 in advance), $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Items include: comics, sports & non-sports cards, videos, and toys. Guest: to be announced; call for the latest information. Contact: Joe Hummel @ 302-456-3055.

GEORGIA

MARCH 31-APRIL 2, APRIL 7-9, 14-16, 21-23, 28-30, DULUTH/ATLANTA

PT Shows, Inc., Outlets Limited Mall at I-85 Pleasant Hill Rd., 32 tables @ $80 each, free admission, Friday 10am-9pm, Saturday 10am-7pm, Sunday 12 noon-6pm. Contact: David Bradford or Charles Dozetos @ (local) 404-495-7671 or 800-251-5150.

INDIANA

APRIL 7-9, INDIANAPOLIS

Indy-Monthly Comic Show, Eastgate Mall, 7150 E. Washington St., 35-plus 8-foot tables @ $60 each or 2 for $95, free admission, mall hours (Friday-Saturday: 10am-9pm; Sunday: Noon-5pm). Contact: Rick Garcia of Hoosier Sportscards @ 317-357-9999

KENTUCKY

APRIL 23, ASHLAND

River Cities Comic Con, Elk's Hall, 900 Carter Avenue (9th & Carter), Downtown Ashland, 30 tables @ $40 each, $2 admission (children 6 & under free), 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

LOUISIANA

MAY 13, SHREVEPORT

Com-X-I Comic & Non-Sports Show, Ramada Inn, 5116 Monkhouse Drive, I-20 & Monkhouse Drive, 35 8-foot tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Contact: Cecil Johnson of The Comic Line @ 501-794-3394.

MARYLAND

TUESDAY, MAY 9, BALTIMORE

North Point Plaza Flea Market Comic Book & Collectibles Show, 2401 North Point Blvd., 45 tables @ $20 each, free admission, 5pm-10pm, items include comic books, non-sportscards, videos, and toys. Contact: Brian Miller @ 410-285-4504 or 410-668-6071

MASSACHUSETTS

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, ROCKLAND

Monthly Comic and Non-Sport Card Show presented by BIG CAT Productions. Ramada Inn, Exit 14 (Route 228) off of Route 3, 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission (children under 6 free), 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, original art, POGs, and thousands of low-priced comics. Free credit raffles, newsletter, and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

SUNDAY, APRIL 9, NATICK

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic and Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Route 9E off of Route 30, 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission (children under 6 free), 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, original art, POGs, and thousands of low-priced comics. Free credit raffles, newsletter, and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

APRIL 23, WOBURN

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic & Non-Sport Card Show. Ramada Hotel (Exit 35 [Rt. 38] off Route 128), 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission (children under 6 free), 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, original art, POGs, and thousands of low-priced comics. Free credit raffles, newsletter, and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

APRIL 1, NASHUA

Artist Paul Ryan of Marvel's *Fantastic Four* will appear at the BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic and Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn, Exit 4 off Route 3, 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission (children under 6 free), 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, original art, POGs, and thousands of low-priced comics. Free credit raffles, newsletter, and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW JERSEY

APRIL 8, SECAUCUS

Toys, Comics, and Non-Sportscards Show, Holiday Inn, 300 Plaza Drive, 100-plus tables @ $49 each, $4 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Contact: Joe Biasco @ 201-863-8720 or Ken Laurence @ 201-385-1557

APRIL 15, WOODBRIDGE

Comic Book Marketplace, The Sheraton Hotel, 515 Route 1 South, across from the Woodbridge Mall, 40 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Howard Simpson (*Turok, Timewalker*, and *Showcase*), and Doug Baron (*Sugar Ray Finhead*). Plus a $100 show cash giveaway! Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955

APRIL 30, FREEHOLD

Comic Book Marketplace, The Freehold Gardens Hotel, on Rt. 537 West (West Main St.) off Rt. 9 or Rt. 33, 50 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Howard Bender (*Spider-Man Magazine*), Jack C. Harris (*Castle of the Bat, Power Rangers*), Dave Hunt (*The Little Mermaid*), Tom McCraw (*Legion of Super-Heroes*), Dave Megill (*The Nailer*), Joe Monks (*Cry for Dawn, NightCry*), Agnes Pinaha (*Mike Danger*), Bob Pinaha (*Star Trek*), Kurt

Schaffenberger (*Lois Lane, Superman*), John Workman (*Mr. Hero*), and some surprise guests. Plus $100 in show cash door prizes. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955

NEW YORK

APRIL 2, JAMESTOWN

Jamestown's 1st All-Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, 150 West 4th St., (From PA, take Rt. I-90 North to Rt.17, go down Rt. 17 30-45 minutes to Rt. 60/Jamestown exit, turn right from exit ramp onto Rt. 60, go downtown to West 4th St., turn right onto the street, and you can't miss the hotel), 30 tables @ $50 each, admission: $2 for adults (children under 15 $1 00, children under 6 free),10am-5pm. Guests: Tony Isabella (creator/writer, DC's *Black Lightning*), Tom & Mary Bierbaum (*Star, Legion of Super-Heroes*), Chris Eisert (Saint), Rick Arthur (*TMNT*), Steve Skeates ('70s script writer for *Aquaman*). Free giveaway for the first 50 people with paid admission, drawing for *Shi* #1 and $50.00 in dealers' cash. Thousands of comics, including Silver and Golden Age comics. Contact: Al Steffens @ 716-484-9631

APRIL 21-23, ALBANY

Albany King Con '95, Howard Johnson Inn, 1375 Washington Ave. (formerly the Thruway Inn), $5 one-day admission, $8 for two days, and $10 for three days, Fri. 5pm-9pm, Sat. 11am-6pm, Sun. 11am-5pm. Guests: Bill Anderson (*Silver Surfer* inker), Dick Ayers (Silver Age Marvel artist), Michael Bair (*Shi* artist), Charles Barnett (artist of DC's *Star Trek*), Scot Eaton (*Cosmic Powers* artist), Irwin Hasen (Golden and Silver Age artist), John Hebert (*X-Men* artist), Elaine Lee (*Vamps* writer), Jimmy Palmiotti (inker, *Ash* and *Ninjak*), Jim Salicrup (Associate Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of Topps Comics), Len Senecal (Editor of Image Comics), Joe Sinnott (Silver Age Marvel artist). Contact: Russ Chamberlain @ 518-283-5306.

OHIO

APRIL 29, 30, DAYTON

Miami Valley Comic Book & Toy Show, McLin Gym, Irvin J. Nutter Center Arena, 100 6-foot tables @ $90 or 2 for $160, $3 adult admission, $1 children admission (children under 6 free), Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm. Guests: Everette Hartsoe (*Razor*), Don Rosa (*Uncle Scrooge*), Franchesco (*Fusion Force*). Contact: Kevin Forbes @ 606-272-2914.

APRIL 30, CANTON

Canton Comic Con, Sheraton Inn, I-77 at Exit 109 (Everhard Rd.), 28 tables @ $45 each, $2 admission (children 6 & under free), 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

MAY 7, KENT

Comic Book & Non-Sports Card Show, Kent Holiday Inn (I-76 & Rt. 43). 40 tables: 8-foot tables @ $45 each or 6-foot tables @ $40 each, $2 admission (children 6 and under free), 10am-4pm. For show or dealer information, contact: Steve Weimer @ 216-650-4039

OREGON

APRIL 28-30, BEAVERTON

Beaverton Mall Card/Comic Show #4, Beaverton Mall, 3275 S.W. Cedarhills Blvd., 60 tables @ $110 (3 days—1 table), $200 (3 days—2 tables), $90 (Sat. & Sun. table), free admission, Fri. 10am-9pm, Sat. 10am-7pm, Sun. 11am-6pm. Contact: Dewey Tucker of Keeping Score @ 503-526-9655

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 2, CHADDS FORD

Comic Book Marketplace, The Ramada Inn, 1110 Baltimore Pike, at Rt. 1 & 202, 30 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, Mark Waid (*The Flash, Impulse,* and *Legion of Super-Heroes*), and Joe Monks (*NightCry, Cry for Dawn,* and *In Rage*). Plus a $100 show cash giveaway! Contact Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955

APRIL 22, PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Comic Convention, Syria Temple Mosque, PA Tpke. Exit 5 (left at light), 140 dealer spaces @ $75 each, 10am-6pm, $5 admission, 2 free comic books to the 1st 1,000 attendees. There will be artists there to sign those comics, and 100 door prizes given out during the day. Artists include: Harvey Mercadoocasio (*Shi, Windows, Sonic, Betty*), Don Simpson (*Bizarre Heroes, Megaton Man*), Robert A. Kraus (*Chakan, Thunder Mace, Darklord*), Aaron Archer (*Gumbo*), Brian M. Bendis (*Star Trek: DS9, Goldfish, Flaxen*), David Mack (*Kabuki*), Kevin Rasei (*Conjured Image, Cry for Dawn, Hellstalker*), Roy Duncan (*Maniac Chainsaw-Wielding Duckbilled Platypus*), Aaron Warner (*Adventures of Aaron, Maned with Children*), Wayne A. Wong (*Primitives*), Max Ink (*Amoeba Adventures*), plus other artists. Contact: Vaughn Crispin @ 412-539-8821

MAY 6, 7, PITTSBURGH

Collectible Toy Show and Comic Convention, Pittsburgh Expo Mart, Business Rte. 22, PA Tpke. Exit 6, in front of Monroeville Mall, 435 tables @ $45 each, $4 admission (children under 12 $2 admission), 10am-4pm both days, $1 off with this *Wizard* ad. Contact: Vaughn Crispin @ 412-539-8821.

TENNESSEE

APRIL 15, CHATTANOOGA

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Days Inn, I-75 East Ridge Exit, 35 tables @ $45 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm, Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

MAY 13, CHATTANOOGA

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Days Inn, I-75 East Ridge Exit, 35 tables @ $45 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm, Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

TEXAS

APRIL 2, AUSTIN

Card, Comic, and POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North I-H35, 35 tables @ $55 each, $1 50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

APRIL 5, 12, 19, & 26 (WED. NIGHTS), HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy , Exit Silber, 15 tables @ $25 each, free admission, 6pm-10pm. Free admission every Wednesday night. Come out and buy, sell, and trade. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676

APRIL 8, 9, HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 and Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy., Exit Silber, 50 tables @ $125 each, $2 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

APRIL 15, HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Holiday Inn Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Frwy. exit College Airport, 40 tables @ $65, $2 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676

APRIL 15, SAN ANTONIO

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, I-10 410W behind Malibu, 35 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 9-30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

APRIL 23, HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Marriott Westside, 13210 Katy Frwy. exit Eldridge, 40 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact. Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676

APRIL 23, SAN ANTONIO

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Wyndham Hotel (I-10 & Wurzbach), 40 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

APRIL 29, 30, HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy. Exit Silber, 50 tables @ $125 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for cards and comics. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission Contact. Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676

APRIL 30, HOUSTON

Houston Comic Book and Action Figure Show, Harvey Hotel, 2712 Southwest Frwy. at Kirby, 85 dealer tables @ $50 each until April 1st ($70 after April 1st), $3 admission (children 10 and under $1), 10am-5pm, *Magic: the Gathering* and POGs, X-Men Sega Tournament, Action Figure & Model-Building Contest, *Star Wars* and G.I. Joe Contests. Major comic guest to be announced. Major comic book and collectibles auction at 1pm. Superhero cartoons and video games all day. Largest selection of *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* collectibles in the South! Free comics or gift with this ad or a photocopy (one per person)! For show or dealer information call 713-667-TOYS.

VIRGINIA

APRIL 9, TYSONS CORNER

Comic Book and Trading Card Show, Ramada Hotel, 7801 Leesburg Pike, 80 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm Contact. Jeff Rocen @ 703-503-5834

MAY 6, 7, VIRGINIA BEACH

Collector's Mart, Pembroke Mall, 4568 Virginia Beach Blvd., 100 tables @ $110 to $130, free admission, Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 12:30-5:30 pm. Contact: Larry Webster @ 804-486-5870. ★

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

Wizard Bullpen

WE SUCK.

As readers of last month's Bullpen know, the vivacious *Wizard: T.G.T.C.* staff challenged the rookie staff of our new sister publication *InQuest* to a game of miniature golf (hoping to score an easy win to make-up for our humiliating obliteration at the hands of our other sister book, *Collector's Sportslook*, in bowling last year). So *Wizard* Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum, Editor Brian Cunningham, Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky, and Copy Editor Andrew Kardon took the field of battle and faced off against *InQuest* Editor Mike Searle, Art Director Robin Ramos, Contributing Editor Matthew Milliken, and Copy Editor Mike Fasolo. The results? They handed us our asses 131-146. Highlights of the game include Marc falling into the stream, Matt notching an impressive 21 strokes at the final hole, and all the *Wizard* staffers blaming each other for the loss. And as was agreed, the losers (read: us) have to treat them to a Mexican feast. *¡Qué lástima!* A rematch will be scheduled as soon as we find something we know we can beat 'em at.

D-DAY!

Beloved Wizard Marketing Associate Dan Reilly is set to tie the knot on March 10, and in a final salute to his machoness before he becomes a married wuss, we threw the big lug a bachelor party. As often times happens at shindigs like this, some...interesting stuff happened, so we're gonna have to censor a little bit of it. Anyway, here's the lowdown; the chosen many [redacted], where we promptly got tanked [redacted], but then the swing broke. A little later, Kitty showed up and [redacted] Jell-O Jigglers. Then, just as [redacted] was looking for the keys to the cuffs, [redacted] carton of bacon. Then the donkey got a really weird look on his face, perked up his ears, and [redacted] call 911. Then the squad cars showed up and [redacted] wouldn't stop yelling "Go-Go Power Rangers!" [redacted] that's when [redacted] asked if he could leave and if anybody could help him fix his pants.

WHO ARE YOU?

JOE YANARELLA

Managing Editor, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do at Wizard?

Air traffic control. My job is to deal with all the freelancers—assigning, coordinating, and trafficking editorial material through the maze we call *Wizard*. I make sure everything goes through the right stages, and gets done in one month.

You favorite sections in *Wizard*?

Cut & Print, Casting Call, and Wizard News.

What is your main goal in improving *Wizard*?

I'd like to broaden its horizons; make it more entertainment-related. The comic book medium was niche-oriented, but it's now expanded into films, TV, and other media, and we should expand along with it.

What would your biography be called?

How the Hell Did I Get Here?

What qualities do you most admire in journalists?

Creativity. I like people who can make me see a subject or person in a new light, with a new slant or angle I never considered before.

Favorite TV show?

ESPN Sports Center and *NFL Prime Time*. There's nothing better than Chris Berman's "rumbling, stumbling, and fumbling."

Favorite musical performers?

My interest is wide-ranging; I used to be into rap and dance music, but lately, I'm on an alternative kick, like Nirvana and Smashing Pumpkins.

Favorite album?

The Beatles' *White Album*.

Who would play you in a movie?

That's tough: either James Woods or Bart Sears.

Actress with whom you'd like to star in a film?

Tia Carrera, and she would have to fall madly in love with me.

Favorite comic?

I grew up on Marvels. I was a big Spider-Man buff because he not only fought crime, but cracked jokes while he did it. The wise-ass part of me related to him.

What are/were your nicknames?

Joe Yan, Sara, Freddy Krueger, and Super Joe.

What superpower would you want, and why?

The whole indestructible thing would be pretty good; I wouldn't have to wear a seat belt when driving.

Illustration by David Prange

Top 10 Things that'd be Different if the O.J. trial was in a Superhero Universe:

10. The Watcher would show up, note that he is forbidden to interfere in the affairs of humans, and then do stuff anyway.
9. Televised hearings would begin: "Stan Lee presents..."
8. "O.J. smash puny humans! Why puny humans not leave O.J. alone?"
7. Ron Goldman's kung fu brother screams, "You killed my brother! Now I must slake my thirst on the sweetest nectar of all—REVENGE!"
6. O.J. would have a cape.
5. Legion of Doom busts O.J. out seconds before verdict revealed.
4. Lots of dramatic, upward-looking Gil Kane shots of Judge Ito.
3. The bloody *power* glove.
2. The Punisher would have already killed O.J.
1. Suddenly, the entire courtroom appears in a Shi'ar warship!

COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #18

Once again, folks, it's time to hop on the *Collector's Sportslook* Express. This month, **Michael Jordan** is driving the train, leading a whole section on minor league baseball. We've even brought a feature on **Japanese baseball** along for the ride. If you're still riding the hoop season, we butted heads to come up with the *Sportslook* **Over/Underrated Team.** And once again, we haven't skimped on the contests. Look for the second part of the Playoff "Unsung Heroes" contest, as well as a chance to win your very own Talking Frame. This train only makes one stop, so buy your ticket and take a ride with us in May! **$3.95**

INQUEST #1

In April, the same creative team that brings you *Wizard* debuts a new monthly magazine devoted to collectible card games! Every issue of *InQuest* will be filled with the same stuff that makes *Wizard* so spiffy. Take this first issue here: an interview with *Magic: The Gathering* artist and Wizards of the Coast Production Manager Tom Wänerstrand, the real-life history of vampires, a free-for-all chaos game including *Magic*, *Spellfire*, *Uno*, and more. Plus, deck-building tips, industry news updates, and a chance to win an entire set of *Magic* cards! We've also got the most accurate and price guide/card power listings on the planet. So don't make us kick your ass, buy it. It's only **$3.50**

Wizard: The Guide To Comics volume one, forty-five (45), May! 1995.

Please direct all inquiries concerning editorial information to Wizard Editorial Dept., 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064 (or Fax: (914) 268-0053). Please direct all inquiries concerning subscription information to Wizard Subscription Dept., 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064. One-year subscription rate is $24.95, Canada and Mexico $48.90, and all other countries $69.95. All payments in U.S. funds only.

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MADE IN THE U.S.A.

The Winds of War

by Todd McFarlane

I'm somewhat hesitant to discuss topics that aren't fun and lively, but right now things are going on behind closed doors that will affect everyone in the comic book business. How that will trickle down to you, the readers, remains to be seen. But you should be aware of what's happening, because it will affect your retailer. And it will affect me.

In the latter days of 1994, Marvel Comics acquired a comic book distribution company called Heroes World, based out of New Jersey. Now, the two main distributors, Diamond Distributors and Capital City Distribution, as well as many comic book publishers, are worried that Marvel will distribute their comics exclusively through Heroes World. If that happens, the distributors will lose a large part of their income, since they will no longer distribute the comics from the largest publisher in America; the publishers might also be forced to go exclusive through another distributor.

As of this writing, though, the official word from Marvel is that their dealings with the other distributors will remain status quo and that it is buying Heroes World to assess the marketplace in order to see what it can do. Given that Marvel is a publicly-owned corporation, it has to maintain a certain stock price to please the stockholders. If this price dips or stays the same, the stockholders get a little worried, and the corporation must do something to raise the stock price. Marvel's stock price, for anyone who's interested, has been the same for about a year now.

One of the easiest ways to get a stock price up is to maximize the company's profits. Maximizing profits is what Marvel Comics is all about right now. No matter how it window-dresses it or candy-coats it, Marvel's in to maximize every single penny they get. Marvel is raising the prices of its books, it's canceling a lot of titles so it can relaunch with a pricey #1 issue, it's laying off employees, putting out more crossovers so the fans must buy more books, having more cover enhancements to raise prices, more double-sized issues, etc.

And all of these things have nothing to do with what readers really want. Never in my three years in the business as a publisher has somebody come up to me asking, "Can you please raise the price of your comic book?" If I went up to some fans and asked if they wanted *Spawn* for $1.95 or $1.50, I guarantee they'd take the $1.50 one. Marvel can say it is upgrading the paper for improved quality, but it's really just keeping pace with what my fellow co-founders at Image Comics started. If quality was an issue, Marvel could have upgraded its comics 10 years ago.

Heroes World is another extension of Marvel maximizing its profits. There will come a day—whether Marvel says so or not—that it will distribute its comics exclusively through Heroes World. If you're a Marvel accountant that knows nothing about the market, and you notice that distributors are making lots of bucks off of your comics and you as a company own a distributorship, then you could save that much in the future by distributing your own books. The direction Marvel is heading in has nothing to do with putting out better products, it's to make more cash. The fact that Marvel's doing it when sales are lagging—as every publisher's are—comes as no surprise. When everything's going great, it's not a time to react—you only do so when thing's are not going great. Times of panic aren't times to make big decisions, yet that's what many companies do. Marvel is one of 'em. So when things are down, a lot of pressure is placed on the businessmen in Marvel by the stockholders because, naturally, if things don't turn around, those key businessmen will be fired.

So when Marvel eventually goes exclusive, at that point it will force the other publishers to A) go exclusive with another distributor (or buy their own), or B) come up with another way to survive.

Now, can the other distributors survive this? The answer is no. Within a year or two, the distributors will go out of business, some of the small press publishers will be wiped out, and you're going to have one faction fighting against another. Marvel will tell retailers, "For a bigger discount on our books, put up Marvel posters in your store instead of other publishers." And the other distributor that's still standing, will want their clients' posters up. This will put a pull-and-tug on the retailer which isn't really fair.

What Marvel is intending to do will *completely* change all the rules on how comics get from point A to point B. It will become a survival-of-the-fittest situation for both publishers and retailers. It will become a war.

I think Marvel is making a big mistake. Seeing as how it holds 35 percent of the market, it's going up against the rest of the 65 percent. Given those two numbers, if Marvel thinks it can steamroll people and put the small guys out of business, it is underestimating the resilience of the people that will stand against them. Lines will be drawn, and it will be an "us-against-them" battle.

History has proven that any business—whether it be computers, toys, or shoes—that has gone public and starts to maximize profits, loses sight of what it was that got them there in the first place and will always self-destruct.

So, I'm tellin' ya—I don't care what Marvel thinks it's got—the war has begun, and I'm gonna be on the side of the winners. ★

Todd McFarlane is a co-founder of Image Comics, and is the writer and artist of Spawn.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.

WIZARD Profile

Here's looking at...DEREK D'AVRIL

by John B. Lacey

"Y'know, comics really disappoint me these days," admits artist Derek D'Avril. "They never seem to capture the wonderment like the ones companies put out 10 years ago. I intend to change that."

Brash? You bet. And the 20-year-old D'Avril revels in it. Born in New Orleans, La., D'Avril spent his youth traveling the world with his family while his father served in the military. Traveling through Germany, Zimbabwe, and Iceland, among other countries, D'Avril says he never stayed in one place long enough to have friends, and took solace through comics. "My favorites as a kid were [Marvel Comics's] *Team America*—y'know, the guys with motorcycles—and *G.I. Joe*. I could relate to the Joes 'cause I can relate with the whole army thing. I can also be considered something of a weapons expert."

Inspired by Al Milgrom's artwork on Marvel's *West Coast Avengers* title and the nine-issue *Secret Wars II* mini-series during the mid-1980s, D'Avril was determined to become a comic book artist. "Hey, Milgrom may not be a Todd McFarlane, but the guy's got the basics down," he says. "An' with *Secret Wars II*, he got to draw the whole freakin' Marvel Universe. Can't beat that." D'Avril's other influences include Frank Frazetta, Tim and Greg Hildebrandt, Jim Shooter, Marat Mychaels, and John Romita Jr.

His first pro work was seen on the covers and interiors of Creole Comics's 1993 five-issue *Warr-Mongerr*, which D'Avril believes was "better than a lot of what's out there now." In the wake of that, Marvel scooped him up and gave him an assignment for the recently canceled *Marvel Comics Presents*, featuring the X-Factor member Strong Guy. "The book was canceled before the story was printed," he says. "Too bad—it might've saved that book."

Currently residing in New Orleans, D'Avril has set lofty goals for himself: "I see myself taking over the art on *Spawn* in, like, two years. I think I can really take that book to the next level. But between now and then," he pauses, "some of the Image guys have shown interest in tossing work my way. So has Marvel. Right now, I'm weighing my options."

And beyond that? "Look, comics are just a steppingstone for me. I have, in my mind, a 10-year plan where I'll move on in five years and do film work. I figure I'll show the comics industry what it could be, and then I'll do what I really want."

™ & © Derek D'Avril. Photo by Hilton Sanor

First comic book read...
Team America #1.

Favorite current comic...
That's a tough one. While there are a lot of good books out there, none have impressed me enough to be my favorite.

Favorite work of your own...
My stuff for *Warr-Mongerr* was cool, but the inking and coloring sucked.

Person you'd most like to meet...
There's no one I'm really dying to meet.

Most embarrassing moment...
I went skinny-dipping once, and forgot where I left my clothes. The adventure of getting back to my room would make a good comic. Which gives me an idea...

Superpower you'd most like to have...
To make money out of thin air.

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
I'd make money out of thin air.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
I love pork rinds, especially in hot salsa dip. Gives me pretty funky breath, though.

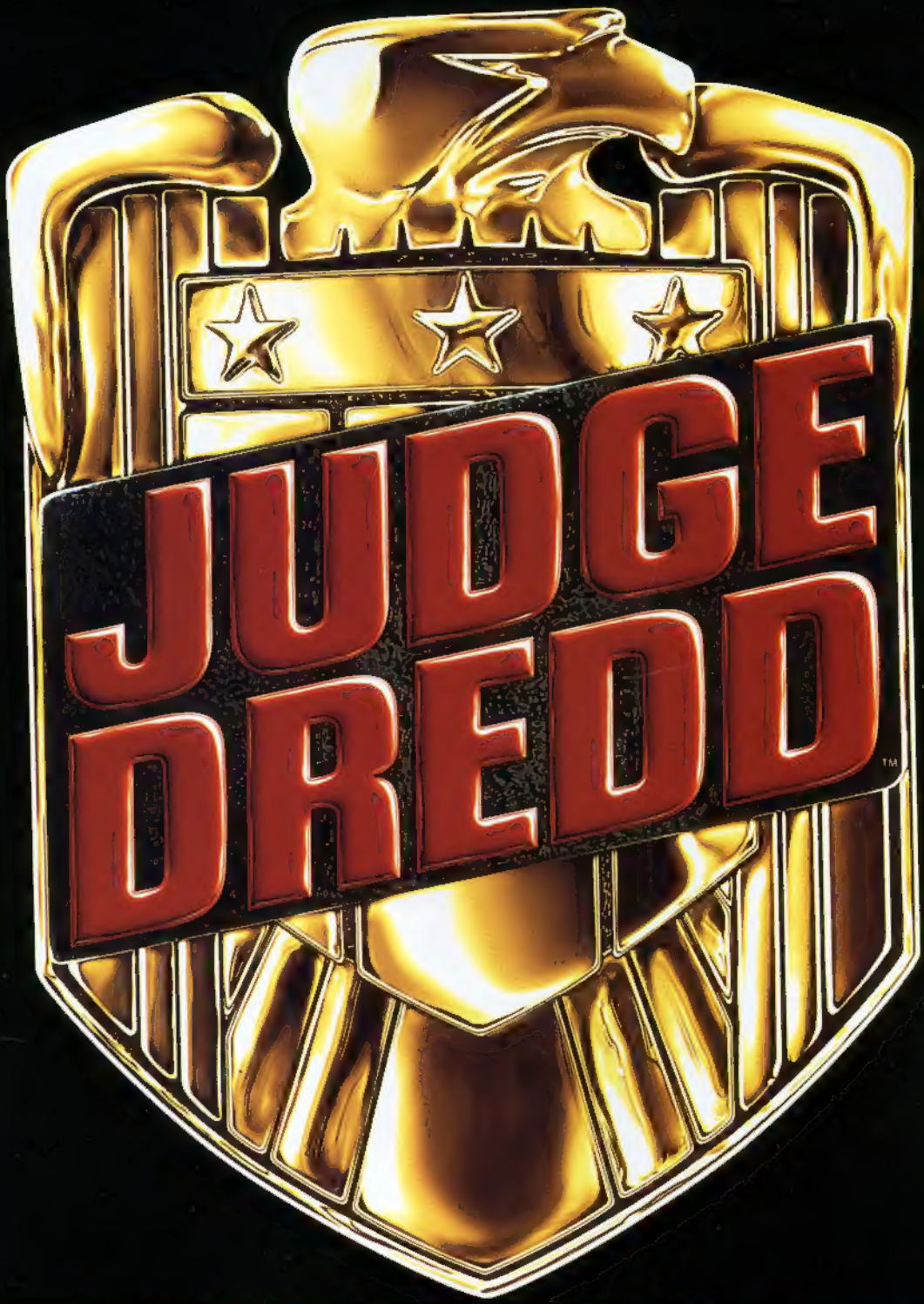
Favorite pastime or hobby...
Dancing. Women love guys who can really move on the dance floor.

Costume you wore the last time you went trick-or-treating...
A Chippendales dancer, last year.

Last good movie you saw...
Pulp Fiction. Tarantino finally did a film right.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Wesley Snipes.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
I'll read the issue this sees print in, but I normally don't pick it up. It's too negative.



TAKE THE LAW INTO YOUR OWN HANDS

JUNE '95

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